

# **Barbara Brooke: A Trend-Setting Art Professional in New Zealand 1959-1980**

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A thesis submitted in  
fulfilment  
of the requirement  
for the  
Degree of  
Master of Arts  
in Art History  
at the  
University of Canterbury  
by Petrena Fishburn.

University of Canterbury  
2014.

*To my friends,  
Jean Bruce, Judy Bruce and Jo Stewart;  
to my parents,  
Heather and Paul Fishburn;  
and to my brother,  
Jason Fishburn.  
(Thank you all for your support throughout the journey.)*

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# Acknowledgements

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This thesis was completed with the assistance of a large number of people who willingly gave their time, recollections and archival material. Warmest thanks are due to the following people:

Lydia Baxendell and Jamie Hanton, Art Collection Curators, University of Canterbury; Douglas Horrell, Visual Resource Technician, the University of Canterbury; Tim Jones, Archivist, and Peter Vangioni, Curator, the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu; Caroline McBride, Archivist, Auckland City Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki; Charlotte McGillen, Archive Assistant, Television New Zealand Collection Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision; Rosemary O’Neil, Archivist, the Christchurch City Council; the staff at the Macmillan Brown Library, the University of Canterbury – especially Erin Kimber, Archivist; Jill Trevelyan, Author; all those who gave their time in interviews – Robin Alborn, Grant Banbury, Nola Barron, Mary Beaven, Joanna Braithwaite, Peter Bromhead, Peter Brooke, Barry Cleavin and Denise Copland, Allie Eagle, Tom and Gill Field, Gilbert Glausiuss, Linda Hart, Kristin Leek, Joan Livingstone, Ken McAnergney, Richard McWhannell, Julia Morison, John Parker, Robyn Peers, John Simpson, Peter Simpson, Bronwyn Taylor, Michael Trumic and Wendy Wadsworth, Philip Trusttum, Peter Webb, and Rodney Wilson.

A special thank you, to John and Fay Coley, Lavinia Cruickshank, Judith Gifford, Kirsten Macfarlane, Quentin Macfarlane, Anna and Stephen Munro, and Lyndsay Rendall, for all they shared with me in memory of Barbara Brooke, and for their permission to reproduce private photographs.

I would like to acknowledge the generous support of the Nippon Foundation and the New Zealand Federation of Graduate Women, for their investment in my research with a scholarship and an award. Thank you.

Additionally, special thanks are due to my family for their patience and continued support, and to my supervisors – Dr Barbara Garrie and Dr Warren Feeney – for their wisdom, high expectations, and endless encouragement.

# Abstract

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Barbara Brooke was an early New Zealand arts professional. Born in Belfast, Canterbury, in 1925, Brooke became an important advocate for contemporary New Zealand art and its developing professionalism in Christchurch throughout the late 1950s to 1980.

The intention of this thesis is to examine and acknowledge Brooke's significant contributions in the establishment of a local professional infrastructure that supported contemporary artists. Although she is virtually unknown today, Brooke established two of Christchurch's earliest dealer galleries, she was Secretary-Manager of the Canterbury Society of Arts during a time of marked progression, she founded Christchurch's earliest craft market and she co-produced New Zealand's innovative and leading professional visual arts magazine. Before many others of her time, Brooke was a serious arts professional who was devoted to the development of professional careers for contemporary New Zealand artists. This thesis asserts Barbara Brooke's rightful place in the history of art professionalism of this country.

# Abbreviations

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ACAG	Auckland City Art Gallery.
BGA	Brooke Gifford Gallery Archives, 11 Cave Terrace, Christchurch.
CH347, CTB	Christchurch Transport Board Collection, Christchurch City Council Archives.
CSA	Canterbury Society of Arts.
CSAA	Canterbury Society of Arts Archive, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu.
G91	“Gallery 91” File, Art History Reference Room, University of Canterbury.
LCP	Lavinia Cruickshank Papers, Grey Lynn, Auckland.
MB198, BBP	Barbara Brooke Papers, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.
MSM	Mollett Street Market.
RMDAG	The Robert McDougall Art Gallery.
UCSFA	The University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts.

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# Introduction

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Barbara Brooke was an advocate for contemporary New Zealand art and its developing professionalism in Christchurch throughout the late 1950s to 1980. However, her contributions have been largely overlooked in our art history. For example, Warwick Henderson's *Behind the Canvas: An insider's guide to the New Zealand Art Market* only records the men that Brooke worked alongside, leaving her unacknowledged when listing accomplishments she was involved in.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the resource library at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu has a file for Andre Brooke – Barbara's ex-husband – but no file on Barbara,<sup>2</sup> even though her contributions to the local art scene surpassed those of her husband. Brooke devoted over 20 years of her life to professionalising the arts at a national level. In contrast to her contemporaries – for example, the prominent art dealer, Peter McLeavey; leading contemporary art collectors, Jim and Marry Barr; the early contemporary art champion, Ron O'Reilly; or the progressive public gallery Director, Peter Tomory – Brooke is virtually unknown.

Yet, Brooke was unquestionably significant in the development of a local professional infrastructure that supported serious contemporary artists in Christchurch; in fact, the level of her involvement is without comparison in New Zealand. Indeed many of her achievements, conducted from Christchurch as her base, can be counted as “firsts” in New Zealand's art history. Throughout her life she was responsible for, or associated with, a number of innovations and entrepreneurial ventures. Brooke established two of Christchurch's earliest contemporary dealer galleries, she was the first female Secretary-Manager of the Canterbury Society of Arts (CSA) during a time of marked progression, she produced New Zealand's earliest professional arts magazine at The Caxton Press, and she founded Christchurch's first contemporary craft market with three friends – the Mollett Street Market. Brooke was also a member of numerous early arts committees and councils. She was a tenacious woman of vision, pragmatic in her approach, and she helped forge an emerging professionalism across the arts in New Zealand.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, mentioning only the names of her business partners – Andre Brooke and Leo Bensemann. Warwick Henderson, *Behind the Canvas: An Insider's Guide to the New Zealand Art Market* (Auckland: New Holland Publishers, 2012) 24-25, 35.

<sup>2</sup> The public gallery does have a collection of ephemera from the Brooke Gifford Gallery though.

Furthermore, as a courageous and a serious female arts professional, Brooke demonstrated a progressive attitude and took on a number of roles which had more traditionally been filled by men. She was, for example, and as already mentioned, the first female Secretary-Manager of the CSA, and then the first female editor employed at The Caxton Press. She entered local politics by joining the Christchurch Transport Board, and the Mollett Street Market was established and coordinated by Brooke, Judith Gifford, Lavinia Cruickshank and Mary Beaven. In fact, Judith Gifford would become Brooke's business partner for the prestigious contemporary dealer she would later found, the Brooke Gifford Gallery. Alongside her pioneering role as a business woman, Brooke's sophisticated understanding of politics reveal her to be an activist for change. In addition to her endeavours to improve the status of artists in the wider community, Brooke advocated for the civil rights of the New Zealand woman.

Remaining largely unacknowledged, Brooke has yet to be given the serious consideration that she deserves. For example, a business acquaintance recalled a meeting with her in the mid-1970s, after she had recently opened the Brooke Gifford Gallery. His impression was: "I felt surprised that she had taken that step [to establish a dealer,...] and yet she had that gallery and obviously ran it successfully. [...But, regardless,] I can actually recall thinking 'oh how is she going to manage without Andre?'"<sup>3</sup> The scepticism and accompanying prejudice of this statement is exposed when considering that, at the time, Brooke had worked as an arts professional for over 16 years.

Virtually nothing has been researched or documented on Brooke since she died in 1980. Reinforcing the notion that oral histories are the discovery of the "non-elite",<sup>4</sup> this thesis draws heavily on primary sources to analyse Brooke's significant role in Canterbury's art history – such as, oral narratives and archival material. Interviews with Brooke's contemporaries were undertaken between 2011 and 2014. Brooke was a proficient administrator and her meticulous records have also been invaluable in this research. The archives she collected during her vocations are now housed in a number of institutions. This research made extensive use of the archives held at the Macmillan Brown Library of the

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<sup>3</sup> This impression of Peter Bromhead's would have been grounded in his earlier memory of Barbara – during their acquaintance at Gallery 91.

Peter Bromhead, Interview, 13 June 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Anna Green, "Oral History and History," *Remembering: Writing Oral History*, ed. Anna Green and Megan Hutching (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004) 1-8.

University of Canterbury and the Canterbury Society of Arts collection at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu.

The first chapter of this thesis documents the establishment of Gallery 91. Founded by Brooke and her husband in 1959, Gallery 91 was her first experience professionally supporting New Zealand artists. The gallery promoted New Zealand art through solos shows, and public education – such as lectures and art classes – but most importantly, through giving serious consideration to contemporary New Zealand art and its artists. Gallery 91 not only introduced Christchurch to a dealer gallery for contemporary artists, it also introduced Barbara Brooke to the community she would devote her life to serving. As a younger woman, Brooke was mentored by her husband in the management of a dealer gallery; this cultivated a respect for artists, and their work, which she would carry throughout her life. Though her own professional identity was linked to that of her husband, Brooke was an efficient administrator with a natural passion for the visual arts, and Gallery 91 marked the beginning of her future career.

Chapter two explores Brooke's period of employment at the CSA in the early 1960s – an environment which shaped her professional vision as an arts manager. Brooke took on the role of Secretary-Manager as a joint position with her husband; her administrative expertise was depended upon as the couple lead the busy art institution into a committed advocacy for contemporary New Zealand art. When Andre resigned, Brooke assertively pushed herself forward to claim the role of Secretary-Manager in 1963. It was the first time the CSA council had appointed a woman to the position, and with Andre gone, Barbara was recognised as a professional individual. She gained further experience as a proficient art administrator, a gifted networker, and through her association with the businessmen on the CSA council, she developed a greater understanding of business and commerce. At the CSA, Brooke embraced the concept that coordinating a business could establish the professional artist. Ultimately, Brooke became frustrated by the restricted institutional model of the CSA; in 1966 she left to forge her own path as an art professional who was assured of her strengths and knowledge. Brooke's decision to leave the leading art institution in Canterbury revealed her to be a woman with a determined vision for the arts.

Chapter three maps Brooke's pragmatic dedication to the arts as a mature and knowledgeable New Zealand arts professional. Brooke took a position at The Caxton Press in 1966, first as

the Editor of the *New Zealand Local Government: News, Comment and Discussion*, but then, also as Co-Founder and Co-Editor of the early visual arts magazine, *Ascent: A Journal of the Visual Arts in New Zealand*, with Leo Bensemann. Anticipating rights of intellectual property, and reaching an international audience for New Zealand art, Brooke and Bensemann documented the work of contemporary New Zealand artists in *Ascent*. Moreover, the magazine's articles provided a critical understanding of art and a context for artists' practise. It was Brooke's understanding of international contemporary art that ensured abstract painting was profiled in *Ascent*. Additionally, Brooke's dedication to contemporary art is revealed in the use of her time outside of these vocations: she placed herself at the forefront of professionalism through her involvement in councils like the New Zealand National Arts Federation and the Print Council of New Zealand, as well as her attendance of the Arts Conference 1970. The use of her home, also, declared her commitment to the contemporary artist: it held her extensive private collection of New Zealand art, it functioned as a social venue and as a place of residence for artists.

Revealing Brooke's understanding of business and commerce, chapter three also documents her involvement in the Mollett Street Market in the early 1970s. Brooke, Gifford, Cruickshank and Beaven, founded and coordinated a supportive forum where craftspeople could sell their wares to the Christchurch public. As the pioneering market for craft in Christchurch, the Mollett Street Market not only utilized the popularity of craft and modelled the concept of arts professionalism, its weekend trade rattled legal conventions. In 1973, Brooke became the Mollett Street Market's spokesperson: she campaigned for its continuation and was pivotal in a successful court hearing against the Shop Assistants' Union which gained the market organisers an exemption to trade.

By the mid-1970s, Brooke was a highly influential figure in the local art scene and was ready to realise a long awaited dream: to found a commercial dealer gallery to establish the professional artist. Genuinely caring for the wellbeing of artists, Brooke recognised the need for a dealer gallery in Christchurch; she partnered with Judith Gifford to found the Brooke Gifford Gallery in May 1975. Chapter four examines the establishment and early function of this contemporary dealer gallery. Brooke was able to utilize her respected position to first refurbish and then maintain her dealer gallery by representing leading artists and engaging local and international clientele. As a professional and full-time dealer gallery that specialised in contemporary New Zealand art, the Brooke Gifford Gallery became Brooke's focus for the

last 5 years of her life. Through the gallery, Brooke modelled the systematic and professional relationship between dealer and artists, fostered a contemporary market in Christchurch, and cultivated a prestigious reputation, while nurturing and establishing professional careers. It is likely that Brooke's passion for artistic innovation would have ensured a more progressive reputation for the gallery had she lived longer, yet, the Brooke Gifford Gallery did become her most visible legacy to the arts. It operated for a further 31 years after her death in 1980 – a tribute to her professional practise and her investment in Gifford as a younger partner.<sup>5</sup>

Brooke's long service of arts advocacy and arts management deserves serious recognition. This thesis draws attention to her significant contributions as a pioneer in the professionalization of the arts throughout the 1960s and 70s. In doing so, it contributes to further discussion about the important role of the dealer gallery in this country's art history and the wider contribution and leadership of women in New Zealand's cultural development and art history.

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<sup>5</sup> The Brooke Gifford Gallery building was closed on 22 February 2011 by the large Canterbury earthquake. Accordingly, the gallery operated for 36 years from 1975 until 2011 – 31 years after Brooke's death. It is worth noting though, that the Brooke Gifford Gallery did have a presence on-line until July 2013. Judith Gifford, Email correspondence, 23 July 2013.

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## Gallery 91

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In 1959 Christchurch's first contemporary dealer gallery, Gallery 91, was founded by Andre and Elsie Brooke. As pioneering professional dealer gallery owners, the Brookes represented the work of a number of New Zealand artists committed to modernism, and fostered a contemporary art market; they raised the frequency and standard of exhibited artworks in Christchurch. Gallery 91 was distinguished from other galleries by its enlivening atmosphere of European sophistication – an environment which respected the visual arts and nurtured professionalism. Though short lived, Gallery 91 became Elsie Brooke's platform for a career she would later develop. Mentored by her husband, she acquired a respect for artists which she would carry throughout her life. This was Elsie's first tentative steps towards a professional career in the arts, a career which she began as an art gallery administrator.

Gallery 91 opened 24 January 1959 and was located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of a building, formally Bucketts Gymnasium, at 91a Cashel Street in central Christchurch.<sup>6</sup> As a stylish, large and open exhibition space, Gallery 91 seemed to declare that New Zealand art was something of value and that its practitioners should be respected. Visitors to the gallery were invited to admire the water colours and oil paintings, prints and drawings, alongside the pottery and ceramics, wood carving, jewellery, fabrics and cushions, which were elegantly displayed on the gallery's walls and throughout the space.<sup>7</sup> (See Fig.9.)

In the late 1950s art was far from being considered a serious or worthy investment by the general public, let alone contemporary New Zealand art. Describing the general attitude, Michael Trumic (former owner of the private gallery, Several Arts), suggests that for “a bag

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<sup>6</sup> Gallery 91 opened for a private viewing on 24 January 1959, but had its first public opening on 26 January 1959.

Barbara Brooke Papers cited in Kane Dyer, “History and Function of Contemporary Galleries in Christchurch: The Emergence and Maturing of an Art Network,” (Unpublished Fine Arts (Hons) Research Paper, Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1995), n.p.

MB198, Barbara Brooke Papers (BBP), Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Invoice to Gallery 91 from Izard and Loughman Solicitors, 10 June 1959.

Margaret Hilson, “New Approach to Pictures,” Unidentified article, January 1959, located in “Gallery 91” File, Art History Reference Room, University of Canterbury (G91).

<sup>7</sup> “Gallery 91,” *Home and Building* (September, 1959): 61.  
MB198, BBP, box 1, ref. no. 0013, Receipt books.

of potatoes they would pay money, but a good painting, no.”<sup>8</sup> Elsie Brooke’s later business associate, Judith Gifford, also reiterated this point, recounting reactions to the idea that producing art might be a serious career path: “ewe art! You want to be an artist, get real!”<sup>9</sup> The situation was concisely explained by Nelson Kenny, *The Press*’ early art critic who was a vocal proponent of New Zealand contemporary art. He commented in early 1959 that: “[t]here is no art market in New Zealand”.<sup>10</sup>

The objectives of Gallery 91 were therefore twofold: it aimed both to educate the public and to provide exposure for artists. Andre Brooke explained to *The Press*: “the gallery will not only give the public greater opportunities to see what is being produce in New Zealand, but will also provide artists with an incentive [sic]”.<sup>11</sup> With these aims, the Brookes established a dealer gallery in Christchurch which followed a similar model to those Andre had observed in Europe during his travels.<sup>12</sup>

### **Establishing a New Sophistication**

Distinguishing Gallery 91 from the country’s art societies, the Brookes created an atmosphere of sophistication by utilizing European culture. When Elsie first met Andre (See Fig.2 & 3.), he was a suave man in his thirties who had arrived in Christchurch after travelling by freighter to Lyttleton.<sup>13</sup> He and his extended family were part of an influx of Jewish refuges

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Trumic and Wendy Wadsworth, Interview, 1 December 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Judith Gifford, Interview, 9 March 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Kenny’s statement is further explained by Athol McCredie who stated that contemporary artists graduating from an art school in the 1950s had no hope of making a living from their practise in New Zealand. Nelson Kenny, “Talented Painter: John Coley’s Exhibition,” *The Press* (14 August 1959), located in G91. Athol McCredie, “Going Public: New Zealand Art Museums in the 1970s” (Unpublished MA Thesis, Palmerston North: Massey University, 2006): 49.

<sup>11</sup> “New Art Gallery Opening Soon in City,” *The Press* (22 January 1959): 7.

<sup>12</sup> Macfarlane – who was at the time a practicing Canterbury painter and friend of the couple – distinctly remembered that the Brookes modelled Gallery 91 after galleries Andre has seen in Paris. Also, it is recorded in *Home and Building* that Andre travelled to Europe 18 months prior to opening Gallery 91. Georgina Irish stated that Barbara accompanied him during this trip. But this was not the case, Barbara’s niece, Lyndsay Rendall, remembered that Andre went to Europe on his own.

Quentin Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

“Gallery 91,” *Home and Building* (September, 1959): 101.

Georgina Irish, “A History and Analysis of the Jonathan Jensen Gallery (1988-1994), Jonathan Smart Gallery (1995-2000)” (Unpublished MA Thesis, Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 2001) 32.

Lyndsay Rendall, Email correspondence, 13 September, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Gilbert Glausiuss, Interview, 9 May 2013.

that came into Christchurch – and wider New Zealand – during and after World War II. Like many other immigrants, they brought with them an injection of European culture.<sup>14</sup>

Living within this new Jewish community, Elsie and Andre socialised with and entertained people known as the local intelligentsia – an energetic nucleus of educated Europeans and those who associated with them.<sup>15</sup> John Coley – who would have his first solo exhibition in Gallery 91 – recalled that this distinctive group were intelligent and socially dynamic, they debated and enjoyed a “café culture and interesting ideas”.<sup>16</sup> Joan Livingstone, who later opened the Labyrinth Gallery in Christchurch, met the Brookes while Andre was building their home in Valley Road in the mid-1950s. As their neighbour, Livingstone recalled that the social life of this community was often conducted in the Brookes’ home. Livingstone and her husband – David, a local psychiatrist – were invited to join these dinner parties which included those who Livingstone found “fascinating”, such as the author and playwright, Ngaio Marsh.<sup>17</sup>

Though there is little information regarding the extent of the Brookes’ redecoration of the space in Cashel Street, by the time Gallery 91 opened, it had been transformed. The couple decorated in what Peter Bromhead – now a New Zealand commercial interior designer and cartoonist – remembered as a “contemporary” design.<sup>18</sup> The gallery had a plain interior, which the Brookes painted, and exposed wooden floors, which would have been refurbished to exhibition standard. A large space, Gallery 91 was 23m long, 11m wide, and had over a 3m high stud. With skylights and one wall of full-width windows, the amount of natural lighting was considerable.<sup>19</sup> A silk parachute – which Elsie spent many hours painstakingly constructing – was attached to lower the ceiling and diffuse the light.<sup>20</sup> While Elsie completed this stereotypically feminine and domestic task, there is no information regarding Andre’s specific contributions to the gallery’s refurbishment. From Elsie’s efforts it is evident that she was extremely committed to the presentation of the gallery and her work was

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<sup>14</sup> Jill Trevelyan, *Peter McLeavey: The Life and Times of a New Zealand Art Dealer* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2013) 54-55.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Joan Livingstone, Interview, 12 June 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Bromhead, Interview, 13 June 2013.

<sup>19</sup> “Gallery 91,” 101.

<sup>20</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.



rewarded when the *Risingholme News* described the stylish space as “an artistic triumph in itself”.<sup>21</sup>

The Brookes also served fresh European coffee to help create an ambience in Gallery 91. Now a normal part of our lives, coffee was a new idea for Christchurch in the 1950s: advertisements for tea and cigarettes illustrated *The Press*,<sup>22</sup> and American style milk bars were the place to meet friends.<sup>23</sup> Instead of coffee – as we now know it – there was only a substance that Bromhead described as “coffee essence and chick wheat in a bottle”, when he relayed what his household drank at that time.<sup>24</sup> But, at Gallery 91 the exotic aroma of real percolated coffee wafted through the air.<sup>25</sup>

The Brookes also cultivated a lively social space within the gallery. The Brookes themselves were a couple who were “very well-known and respected [...] around the town”, explained Coley.<sup>26</sup> In their efforts to establish a social meeting space, the Brookes were determined to make the gallery accessible to the public. Compared to the CSA’s irregular and part-time opening hours,<sup>27</sup> Gallery 91’s hours were extensive – from 9:30am - 5:30pm then 7pm - 11pm on weekdays and Saturday 7pm - 11pm.<sup>28</sup> In addition, Gallery 91’s exhibition openings were exciting ‘social events’.<sup>29</sup> With a glass of sherry in hand,<sup>30</sup> guests could experience what the *Home and Building* magazine described as a refreshing novelty, like a “‘first night’ – [with] the air of liveliness, free discussion, and a general absence of the mausoleum atmosphere that pervades most public galleries.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> “Gallery 91,” *Risingholme News*, located in G91.

<sup>22</sup> Advertisement, *The Press* (21 January 1959): 15.

Advertisement, *The Press* (9 December 1957): 14.

<sup>23</sup> Geoffrey Rice, *Christchurch Changing: An Illustrated History* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2008) 124.

<sup>24</sup> Bromhead, Interview, 13 June 2013.

<sup>25</sup> “Gallery 91,” *Risingholme News*, located in G91.

<sup>26</sup> Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>27</sup> John Coley, Email correspondence, 4 October 2013.

<sup>28</sup> Classifieds, *The Press* (26 January 1959): 1.

<sup>29</sup> This would have been the case throughout the dealer galleries of New Zealand.

Tanya Wilkinson, “A Survey of Primary Players in the Establishment of New Zealand Dealer Galleries,” (Unpublished, 1996) 27.

<sup>30</sup> Openings at Gallery 91 did not occur on a set evening. An opening would take place at 8pm if on a weeknight or 5:30 if on a Saturday.

MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0018, “Membership Programme June to January.”

<sup>31</sup> “Gallery 91,” 101.

Furthermore, those who visited Gallery 91 were greeted with the sound of classical music. Andre, as a violinist himself, introduced the idea of playing classical music in the gallery. Coley remembered that Andre's favourite, with a name easily recalled, was the 19<sup>th</sup> century "Bruch Violin Concerto".<sup>32</sup> In addition to the continuous playing of classical records, the gallery's programme included at least one concert: a "Light Orchestral Concert" was performed by the Christchurch Orchestral Society on 7 July 1959 at 8pm.<sup>33</sup>

### **The Awakening of a Professional Woman**

Elsie had married as a young woman and moved into an intellectual and local art community which had been previously unknown to her. Elsie Barbara Brown had grown up in Belfast, Canterbury; she was the youngest daughter of Alexander Brown and Mary Anne Brown (nee Briggs) and was born in 1925.<sup>34</sup> A year after Elsie met a European man sixteen years her senior, the couple were married on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1945 and their son Peter Brooke was born in August 1953.<sup>35</sup> (See Fig.4 & 5.)

Though this marriage placed Elsie in a new environment, she thrived as an intelligent young woman. Livingstone remembered: "[she] was an extremely intelligent, quick to learn and Andre taught her a whole lot about how to cook French food, live in a certain way and to entertain".<sup>36</sup> Elsie absorbed this new way of living, moving comfortably within it. She gained knowledge from discussions and contributed to intellectual debate; she practised hospitality, and she made many new friends – not only in the Jewish community but also in the local art world.<sup>37</sup> Coley was so convinced by Elsie's integration that he believed she *was* Jewish.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>33</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0018, "Membership Programme June to January."

<sup>34</sup> Elsie Barbara Brown was born on the 23 March.

Lyndsay Rendall, Email correspondence, 2 July 2013.

<sup>35</sup> John Coley, "Andre Brooke," *Canterbury Society of Arts Preview*, no.142 (October - November, 1988): 4. Registration Officer, Births, Deaths & Marriages - Whānautanga, Matenga, Mārenatanga, The Department of Internal Affairs - Te Tari Taiwhenua, "Copy of Register of Marriage by Officiating Minister," Email correspondence, 2 October 2013.

Peter Brooke and Lyndsay Rendall, Email correspondence, 2 July 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Livingstone, Interview, 12 June 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Barry Cleavin, now an established New Zealand printmaker and a later friend of Elsie Brooke's, explained that contacts were made in the art community simply by being an "art couple".

Barry Cleavin and Denise Copland, Interview, 30 January 2012.

Ken McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Coley stated: "[she] comes from that culture [...] she had a Jewish background, I think." Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

Elsie was initiated into the Canterbury art scene by her husband, and it was Andre who drove Gallery 91's establishment. Andre not only had an insight into the needs of local artists, he could compare his experiences as a European artist to the local art scene, which he consistently maintained was underdeveloped. In an article published in *Home and Building* magazine in September 1959, Andre announced:

In New Zealand, apart from two or three public galleries, we have only picture framers pretending to be connoisseurs, and the public has simply followed the standard they have haphazardly set. We saw the need for a gallery which would have sufficient honesty and respect for art to display those works which were honest and sincere in conception and execution, without regard to popular appeal or saleability.<sup>39</sup>

Interviewed and quoted in this article, Andre is presented as the public 'voice' and 'face' of Gallery 91. Andre had a knowledge and experience of European modernism that was largely unknown to Christchurch artists and the New Zealand arts community in general.<sup>40</sup> Coley reflected the admiration of many young contemporary artists in Canterbury when he exclaimed that the distinguishing factor of Gallery 91 – against alternative dealers and art societies throughout the country – was “Andre himself”.<sup>41</sup> (For an abstract oil painting by Andre Brooke, see Fig.6.)

Elsie, herself, was inspired and encouraged by Andre. When Andre arrived in Christchurch he informed his new acquaintances he was French and according to his relation, Gilbert Glausiuss, Andre had “Anglicised” his name – changing it from the Hungarian spelt, Bruck, to Brooke.<sup>42</sup> Andre changed his surname in order to insure his acceptance into Christchurch society. In the same manner, he encouraged Elsie to publically use her second name as her Christian one. Quentin Macfarlane, who knew the couple well and recalled this narrative, asserted: “[she] was just an ordinary girl, [...] these older men groomed their younger prettier wives. So Barbara was reinvented [...] and Andre said ‘you would be better if you are Barbara Brooke’”.<sup>43</sup> As an unprompted narrative, this proved to be particularly important in

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<sup>39</sup> Andre Brooke quoted in “Gallery 91,” 101.

<sup>40</sup> Andre painted abstract Cubist-influenced works which impressed aspiring modernists in The Garden City. He exhibited in The Group Shows of 1950, 1959, 1960, 1961, and 1963. *Survey*, no.16 (November, 1977): 17-18.

Coley, “Andre Brooke,” 4.

<sup>41</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>42</sup> Glausiuss, Interview, 9 May 2013.

Gilbert Glausiuss, Email correspondence, 17 September 2013.

<sup>43</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

Macfarlane's memory.<sup>44</sup> While Macfarlane's comment could be alluding to the idea that Andre had recreated Elsie, arguably, it was a general practise for men of Elsie's generation to use their second name professionally. Rather than dominating, or 'creating' her, Andre was advising Elsie to do the same as he had done, and her male contemporaries did. Andre essentially encouraged Elsie into a professional career, to think of herself as a professional woman with – what could be called – a 'business-name'.

Undoubtedly, Elsie's marriage to Andre points to the emergence of a new life for her; this was a shift marked by her name change – which illustrated her commitment to a professional future. As Livingstone recognised: "Andre was instrumental, basically [...] getting her [Elsie] interested in the arts [...], but at the same time, she was bright in herself and did all sorts of things [sic]".<sup>45</sup> Elsie was willing to be influenced by Andre, and certainly, saw some relevance in using her middle-name. The assented name change signified Elsie's own choice to step into a professional persona. The change from 'Elsie' to 'Barbara' represented the beginning of her career in contemporary art.

Gallery 91 became a platform for Barbara to begin to develop her professional career as an arts advocate. Instead of an education at a University, she gained her education through the experience of working alongside her husband in the management of the gallery. Comments about Barbara's eagerness to learn emerged from the couple's contemporaries. For example, Ken McAnergney – a later business associate and friend – recalled, "Barbara would have observed his [Andre's] way of dealing with people. She was a quick learner. [...] She adapted very quickly to whatever she was doing";<sup>46</sup> Coley also explained "she acquired a lot of understanding about who was a good artist and who was not, through Andre and Gallery 91".<sup>47</sup> Inspired by Andre, Barbara chose to grow her knowledge in areas that deeply interested her – particularly, contemporary New Zealand art and the respectful support of its practitioners. In the words of Coley, Gallery 91 was the place Barbara "met and formed life-long friendships with many of the country's leading artists".<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Oral historian, Alessandro Portelli, argued that if an event is committed to a person's long-term memory it is significant to them. In this case, Macfarlane recalled an event which took place over 50 years ago. Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 2006) 36.

<sup>45</sup> Livingstone, Interview, 12 June 2013.

<sup>46</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>48</sup> John Coley, "Christchurch," *Art New Zealand* 16 (Winter, 1980) 59.

However, it must be noted that Barbara's managerial role was secondary in Gallery 91, and this too was acknowledged by her contemporaries. John Simpson – the former head of the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts (UCSFA) – recalled: “[a]t this stage she was simply the wife of Andre [...]. She was a good wife, she was loyal and supportive”.<sup>49</sup> In addition, Livingstone, while recalling the bustling nature of Gallery 91, acknowledged that Andre took a role of leadership: “[i]t was an all over busy thing. She [Barbara] would be there, Andre would be the top notch”.<sup>50</sup> The couple's roles in the operation of Gallery 91 were aptly determined by a local newspaper when it recorded that Gallery 91 was established by “Mr A. Brooke, with the help of his wife”.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, it was probable that Barbara typed every letter found in Gallery 91's archives signed ‘Andre Brooke’; this signifies that her professional identity was hidden behind her husband –<sup>52</sup> something that John Simpson explained as Barbara working in the “shadow of Andre.”<sup>53</sup>

Barbara's role and status in Gallery 91 was influenced and determined by social conventions of the time. In 1959 women were still associated with the domestic sphere and were there to ‘support’ their husbands.<sup>54</sup> Writing for the *New Zealand Listener*, the year Gallery 91 opened, Margot Roth challenged the general perception that women were “contributing subordinates” – a normalized limitation placed on women in the late 1950s who also worked outside of the domestic realm.<sup>55</sup> At this time, Barbara was the primary carer for the couple's six year old son and Barbara's teenage niece;<sup>56</sup> her equal commitment to Gallery 91 revealed her to be extremely enthusiastic and energetic. Mary Beaven – a later business partner of Barbara's – explained: “Andre had the knowledge and Barbara had the energy and together they were responsible for [the] first dealer gallery in Christchurch.”<sup>57</sup> The operation of Gallery 91 was a team effort: by Andre's own admission the couple ran Gallery 91 together.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> John Simpson was the Head of the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts from 1958 until 1990. John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>50</sup> Livingstone, Interview, 12 June 2013.

<sup>51</sup> Hilson, “New Approach to Pictures,” Unidentified article, January 1959, located in G91.

<sup>52</sup> MB198, BBP, box 1 and 2.

<sup>53</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>54</sup> Charlotte MacDonald, “Mid-Century Rumblings: 1940s and 1950s,” *The Vote the Pill and the Demon Drink: A History of Feminist Writing in New Zealand, 1869-1993* (Wellington: Bridget William Books, 1993) 123.

<sup>55</sup> Margot Roth, “Housewives or Human Beings,” *New Zealand Listener* (20 November 1959): 6-7 reproduced in MacDonald, “Mid-Century Rumblings: 1940s and 1950s,” 139-141.

<sup>56</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>57</sup> Mary Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>58</sup> It is worth noting that Andre acknowledged that the operation of Gallery 91 was a team effort: “*we're sticking to our principles. [...] We want art, not business*” (author's italics).

Drawing on her accounting and secretarial skills, Barbara worked as the proficient administrator of Gallery 91. In looking at Gallery 91 archives, it is evident that much of the documentation is in Barbara's hand.<sup>59</sup> In addition, Macfarlane acknowledged that: "Barbara was good at running things. She had the ability to organise and she [...] knew how to keep books."<sup>60</sup> This claim is evidenced by the completeness of the gallery's archives, which were collected and originally preserved by Barbara.<sup>61</sup> Certainly, the proficient administration skills which she carried throughout her professional career were honed at Gallery 91; these were skills that would later win her the position of inaugural female Secretary-Manager at the CSA.

Professor John Simpson described Barbara as "diffident" when she interacted with those she considered to have a greater knowledge of art than her.<sup>62</sup> However, this allegation was clarified by Livingstone as Barbara's method of learning: she was "hanging back, observing and watching".<sup>63</sup> While Barbara may have come across as a shy young woman to more established professional males, this was not the case for other visitors to the gallery. Gallery 91's operation was not only Barbara's first role as an arts administrator, but also the first time that she had worked professionally as a liaison between the artist and the public – a role which she is remembered as executing well. McAnergney recalled visiting the gallery as a young man: Barbara was "very well dressed, [...] she looked every inch a gallery owner or a gallery manager. [...] She was a] well-spoken [and] informed woman who knew what she was talking about [and who also] asked you a little bit about yourself."<sup>64</sup> To McAnergney, Barbara was approachable, personable and entirely professional.

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"Gallery 91," 103.

<sup>59</sup> MB198, BBP, box 1 and 2.

<sup>60</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>61</sup> The archives were then donated to the Macmillan Brown Library by the Brooke Gifford Gallery after Brooke's death.

Erin Kimber, Archivist, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, Email correspondence, 17 November, 2014.

<sup>62</sup> John Simpson explained that though Barbara would later become known as a flamboyant and dominant woman, at Gallery 91 – when he first met her – "she was diffident. She was, as it were, at the support of Andre. She put his career ahead of any of personal ambitions". (This was also said in relation to Barbara's period working alongside Andre at the Canterbury Society of Arts.)

John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>63</sup> Livingstone, Interview, 12 June 2013.

<sup>64</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

In fact, warmth and friendliness were qualities that both of the Brookes were known for; this was important in helping make the gallery, and the contemporary art they exhibited, accessible to the public. According to articles published in *Home and Building* and *Risingholme News*, the variety of exhibitions at Gallery 91 were to provide the public with an opportunity to observe what they “might otherwise never see”,<sup>65</sup> and “to give the public a place where they could learn how to look at pictures and [...] understand them”.<sup>66</sup> Promoting contemporary New Zealand art, which only a small minority of the public understood, took effort and approachability. Barbara or Andre always attended the gallery to provide explanations regarding the featured exhibition. *Risingholme News* announced that they were “always [present] to help the ‘man in the street’ whose approach to modern painting is often confused and doubting.”<sup>67</sup>

### **Professionalism and Cultivating Public Taste: the Gallery’s Operation**

While Auckland lead the way for the professionalization of public art galleries – through the leadership of Eric Westbrook and Peter Tomory at the Auckland City Art Gallery (ACAG) – Wellington lead the way nationally when it came to the private dealer gallery;<sup>68</sup> in Christchurch, the Brookes introduced a new standard of professionalism with Gallery 91. Through their professional management and their display of selected contemporary New Zealand art, the couple attempted to foster the professional artist and cultivate a more progressive public attitude towards contemporary art. Andre explained that Gallery 91 was to “provide facilities for presenting the best of New Zealand art to a public which, as it turns out, was eager for guidance, and to provide New Zealand artists with the outlets for their work that they had lacked for so long”.<sup>69</sup>

Gallery 91 had a paying membership similar to the CSA, with subscribers who received the benefits of private openings and monthly lectures,<sup>70</sup> and also working members. Over 50

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<sup>65</sup> “Gallery 91,” 103.

<sup>66</sup> “Gallery 91,” *Risingholme News*, located in G91.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> In 1949 New Zealand’s first art dealer devoted to contemporary art was established by Helen Hitchings. Gordon Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1940-1960: Conformity and Dissension* (Wellington: Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, 1981) 30-32, 51.

<sup>69</sup> “Gallery 91,” 101.

<sup>70</sup> Possibly a practise taken from art societies to lessen the financial risk for the couple, the membership subscription cost 1 pound 1 shilling and was a fee intended to reoccur annually. The gallery provided membership cards to its subscribers, which, when produced, allowed “free admission to all Exhibitions and

New Zealand artists are listed as the gallery's working membership; their artworks were displayed throughout the year in what the Brookes called the "continuous exhibition".<sup>71</sup> These were the works of both national and local artists that the Brookes felt had earned a long-term place on the gallery walls as esteemed practitioners.<sup>72</sup>

Although it has been claimed that a solo show by Colin McCahon was the exhibition that opened Gallery 91,<sup>73</sup> the inaugural exhibition was the "Continuous Exhibition of Contemporary New Zealand Art". Opened by Ngaio Marsh at a private viewing, Gallery 91's grand opening included 140 works by New Zealand artists, and filled the extensive exhibition space.<sup>74</sup> (See Fig.8.) *The Press* reported that the featured artists were "serious" and had "not previously exhibited in Christchurch". The contemporary New Zealand artists who were listed in newspaper articles reporting on the exhibition included: Helen Brown, Colin McCahon, Russell Clark, Roy Cowan, Rudolf Gopas, Louise Henderson, William Jones, Hamish Keith, Doris Lusk, Milan Mrkusich, Juliet Peter, W.J. Reed, Olivia Spencer-Bower and Toss Woollaston.<sup>75</sup>

By promoting a discrete selection of artists and consistently holding solo exhibitions, certainly, Gallery 91 profiled the professional artist to a greater extent than the Robert McDougall Art Gallery (RMAG), or the CSA. In 1959, William Baverstock was the

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Lectures". According to *Home and Building*, by September 1959, 250 members had paid their subscription to the Brookes. But, records within archives list only 130 members.

MB198, BBP, box 1, ref. no. 0006, receipt book; box 2, ref. no. 0018, membership card.

"Gallery 91," 61.

"Members of Gallery 91", located in G91.

<sup>71</sup> *The Press* reported that the Brookes intended the gallery to hold both "a continuous and changing exhibition"; this was possible because of the large gallery space which was divided into sections. The artworks were sold at a 20% commission, and the Brookes began collecting the work of esteemed New Zealand contemporary artists from as early as December 1958. See Appendix 1 for Gallery 91's working members.

"New Art Gallery Opening Soon in City," 7.

MB198, BBP, box 1, ref. no. 0006, Receipt book of work from artists; box 1, ref. no. 0013, "Receipt of Paintings etc"; box 2, ref. 0017, Sales notifications for artists.

<sup>72</sup> In a later letter written to Robert Ellis, the Brookes explain they were "desirous of having work from as many professional artists as possible in NZ [sic]". Though this letter was in relation to their programme at the CSA, it was a programme established in Gallery 91.

MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to Robert Ellis from the Brookes, 8 March 1960.

<sup>73</sup> Contrary to what has been documented previously by Irish.

Irish, 32.

<sup>74</sup> Hilson, "New Approach to Pictures," Unidentified article, January 1959, located in G91.

Classifieds, *The Press* (26 January 1959): 1.

"Official Attitude To Arts In N.Z 'Baffles' Ngaio Marsh," Unidentified article, January 1959, located in G91.

<sup>75</sup> "New Art Gallery Opening Soon in City," 7.

"Gallery 91 New Painters Introduced," *The Press* (30 January 1959), located in G91.



Secretary-Manager of the CSA and the Honorary Curator at the RMAG.<sup>76</sup> Artists who practised a local modernist style were increasingly frustrated by Baverstock's opposition to its promotion.<sup>77</sup> Yet, while Baverstock refused to offer support, others acted in his place: The Group – an artists' collective, since 1927, which encouraged contemporary practise, and Ron O'Reilly – the Christchurch City Librarian, who purchased contemporary art and exhibited it in an allocated room upstairs in the Canterbury Public Library.<sup>78</sup> While these initiatives did counteract some of the frustrations of local contemporary practitioners, The Group exhibitions were annual and O'Reilly's arranged exhibitions were periodical.

Nelson Kenny, *The Press* reporter, anticipated that what the Brookes were offering would fill this void for the city. Published the week Gallery 91 opened, he stated in an article:

For the public this new gallery will meet a definite need and do a lot to fill the gap caused by the McDougall Art Gallery's lack of activity. [... Also, artists who will] derive incentive and stimulation from exhibiting their work have been presented with magnificent opportunities. The gallery should do much toward the development of a more professional, less dilettantish attitude to art in New Zealand.<sup>79</sup>

In their efforts to change the public's general attitude to contemporary New Zealand art, the Brookes incorporated fast paced "changing exhibitions" to their programme.<sup>80</sup> During 1959 the Brookes hosted exhibitions organised by the ACAG, such as: "Contemporary New Zealand Drawings" (opening 13 July), "New Zealand Prints" (opening 14 September), "Five Wellington Painters" (opening 24 July) and "Three Auckland Painters" (opening 18 August).<sup>81</sup> An invoice from the Auckland City Council dated 16 November 1959 added "Five

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<sup>76</sup> While he was employed at the CSA, Baverstock was also responsible for the management the RMDAG as Honorary Curator from 1949 to 1959. At the end of 1959, he left the CSA and became the full-time Director of the RMDAG.

Warren Feeney, "The Canterbury Society of Arts 1880-1996: Conformity and Dissension Revisited," (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Dunedin: University of Otago, 2008) 142, 173.

<sup>77</sup> Modernism was incompatible with Baverstock's belief in 19<sup>th</sup> Century aesthetics and values; he opposed its promotion. For example, he was involved in CSA's refusal to purchase Frances Hodgkin's contemporary paintings, such as the *Pleasure Garden*. This was a controversy that took place between 1948 and 1951. For more information on the 'Pleasure Garden incident' see:

Warren Feeney, *The Radical, the Reactionary and the Canterbury Society of Arts* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2011) 77-89.

<sup>78</sup> Neil Roberts and Felicity Milburn, *A Concise History of Art in Canterbury 1850-2000* (Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 2000) 74.

<sup>79</sup> Nelson Kenny, "Gallery 91 New Painters Introduced," *The Press* (30 January 1959), located in G91.

<sup>80</sup> Andre Brooke quoted in the *Home and Building*.

"Gallery 91," 101.

"New Art Gallery Opening Soon in City," 7.

<sup>81</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0018, "Membership Programme June to January."

New Zealand Water-colourists” to this extensive list of touring exhibitions that year.<sup>82</sup> Such exhibitions not only promoted national contemporary artists, but as the exhibitions in Gallery 91 changed often – every ten to thirteen days – the Brookes were exposing the Christchurch public to as much contemporary New Zealand art as was physically possible.<sup>83</sup>

Essentially, the Brookes hoped to encourage future collectors of art. This was particularly evident in an exhibition of art from the homes of Cantabrians – which was arguably a concept that had its origins in an exhibition at ACAG in August 1958.<sup>84</sup> Amongst other “changing exhibitions”, the Brookes hosted a group exhibition called “Christian Art Exhibition” in September and October 1959.<sup>85</sup> This exhibition remained in John Simpson’s memory as unusually distinct. He recalled that it comprised Cantabrian’s private collections from their overseas travels and was an “extraordinary [...] and [a] very brave [venture by the Brookes] because it wasn’t a sale exhibition”.<sup>86</sup> Such an exhibition, borrowed from the homes of Cantabrians, expressed the notion that art had a context in the home of New Zealanders – that art was not something to be apprehensive of, but something to collect, something to enjoy, and something to treasure.

The Brookes’ objective was not simply to promote art in general, but to endorse “the best” contemporary art – to encourage professionalism.<sup>87</sup> The Brookes promoted artists as

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<sup>82</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Invoice from the Auckland City Council, 16 November 1959.

<sup>83</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0018, “Membership Programme June to January.”

<sup>84</sup> Though the ACAG exhibition – “A Private Collection of New Zealand Artists: Thirty Seven New Zealand Paintings From the Collection of Charles Brasch and Rodney Kennedy” – featured New Zealand painters, there was a shared concept between this and the “Christian Art Exhibition” at Gallery 91. Both intended to endorse the appreciation and collection of art. Tomory explained that the exhibition at ACAG promoted the “furtherance of serious art in New Zealand” by demonstrating “the judgement of its owners and the confidence they have in the painters of their own land”; the artworks from Cantabrian’s private collections, which were exhibited at Gallery 91, “highlight[ed] ... that] as art it did not only belong inside churches, it belonged to the people”, stated John Simpson.

John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

Richard Lummis, “Modelling the New Zealand Artists: Rita Angus and Colin McCahon,” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Dunedin: University of Otago, 2004) 235.

Auckland City Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki. Exhibition catalogue, “A Private Collection of New Zealand Artists: Thirty Seven New Zealand Paintings From the Collection of Charles Brasch and Rodney Kennedy”, August 1958 [accessed 10 September 2014]. Available <http://www.aucklandartgallery.com/media/166436/cat21.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> Other group exhibitions held at the gallery included an “Open Exhibition,” and the New Zealand Photographic Society’s Exhibition. See Appendix 1 for the list of artists who took part in the “Open Exhibition”. MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0018, “Membership Programme June to January.”

<sup>86</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>87</sup> Andre Brooke quoted in the *Home and Building*. “Gallery 91,” 101.

professional individuals though their commitment to the concept of the ‘solo-show’.<sup>88</sup> From January to November 1959, the Brookes selected and coordinated the solo exhibitions of 6 artists: (in sequence of showing) Toss Woollaston, Helen Brown, Douglas MacDiarmid, John Coley, Colin McCahon and June Black (See Fig.7 for McCahon’s Exhibition Invitation).<sup>89</sup> In contrast to showing in a group exhibition, like at the CSA or with The Group, a solo exhibition at Gallery 91 distinguished an artist as a worthy professional. Commenting on Woollaston’s solo show in March 1959, *The Christchurch Star* explained that “[w]hen one views virtually a whole wall of his work the first impression is much more satisfying”.<sup>90</sup> Crucial to the gallery’s success as a dealer, the Brookes coordinated a full-time programme to highlight particular New Zealand artists who they considered to be of such a calibre.

One very memorable exhibition at Gallery 91 was a solo exhibition by McCahon. Held in October 1959, this large exhibition filled the gallery space and showed McCahon’s most recent work – artworks completed during November 1958 and August 1959.<sup>91</sup> Nola Barron – who became the Director of the CSA in the 1970s – remembered: “Gallery 91 [...] had a McCahon exhibition, as I recall [...], and that was probably the first time I had sort of looked

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<sup>88</sup> While the Brookes were not the first in Christchurch to organise a solo-show – O’Reilly had arranged a McCahon solo show in 1958 at the Christchurch City Library Exhibition Hall – they were the first to coordinate a professional programme of solo exhibitions.

Ken Hall, “A Progressive Champion: R.N O’Reilly, Colin McCahon and the Canterbury Public Library Art Loan Collection,” *The Journal of New Zealand Art History* 31 (2010): 64.

<sup>89</sup> It is documented in *A Concise History of Art in Canterbury* that the solo exhibitions held at Gallery 91 included Toss Woollaston, Doris Lusk, Helen Brown, Douglas MacDiarmid, Rudolf Gopas, Frank Gross, John Coley, June Black, Olivia Spencer Bower and Colin McCahon. However, with an already extensive programme and a total operating period of ten months, it is unlikely that so many solo exhibitions took place. Alternatively, there is evidence for the following solo exhibitions: the gallery’s programme states that Helen Brown’s took place on 13 June, Douglas MacDiarmid’s on 30 June, John Coley’s on 11 August, Colin McCahon’s on 6 October, and June Black’s on 7 November. The programme only dates from June 1959, and there is an undated catalogue for a solo exhibition by Woollaston located in the gallery’s archives – which, *The Press* noted, took place in March 1959.

Roberts and Milburn, 74.

MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0018, “Membership Programme June to January”; box 2, ref. no. 0020, Woollaston exhibition catalogue, “One Man Show,”; box 1, ref.0007, Notebook of Money Owing to Artists. Nelson Kenny, “M.T. Woollaston’s Paintings Show Continuity of Style,” *The Press* (18 March 1959), located in G91.

<sup>90</sup> “Woollaston Exhibition in the City,” *The Christchurch Star* (25 March, 1959), located in G91.

<sup>91</sup> “McCahon Show Opens Today,” Unidentified article, located in G91.

MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0018, “Membership Programme June to January.”

at abstract art.”<sup>92</sup> Barron was one of the next generation of art managers who were visually stimulated by Gallery 91’s programme; this exhibition was highlighted in her memory as significant for both Christchurch’s and the gallery’s history. Barron was not alone in claiming this event as important for the city: McCahon’s exhibition was labelled by the local paper as “the largest and most important exhibition to have been held in the city by a New Zealand painter”.<sup>93</sup>

The couple promoted each exhibition to a professional standard in both advertising and presentation. Invitations and catalogues were designed and printed by The Caxton Press and sent to an audience across New Zealand of up to 430 people. Artists were also assisted in the professional presentation of their work: for example, the Brookes, on occasion, intervened and arranged the framing of artworks.<sup>94</sup>

As part of their commitment to supporting local contemporary artists, the Brookes exhibited the work of young emerging artists. As the academic year began in 1959, the University of Canterbury student publication, *Canta*, noted that Andre encouraged “young artists to have enough courage to bring their work and show it”. He advised them to “come often – the scenery changes all the time [sic]”.<sup>95</sup> Gallery 91 was a place where young artists could experience the work of established New Zealand artists, but also a place that provided an opportunity to show their own work to the Christchurch public.

Such attentiveness attracted Coley – then an art teacher at Papanui High School – for his very first solo exhibition.<sup>96</sup> As a young artist, Coley experienced the benefits of exhibiting with a professional dealer.<sup>97</sup> A review by Kenny in *The Press* followed Coley’s one-man-show. Kenny praised Coley, writing that: “a measure of Mr Coley’s talent is that he is most successful in his larger paintings. ‘The Cloak’ [...] is a very skilful essay in the use of colours

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<sup>92</sup> Nola Barron, Interview, 20 March 2013.

<sup>93</sup> “McCahon Show Opens Today,” Unidentified article, located in G91.

<sup>94</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0012, artist alphabetical file cards; box 2, ref. no. 0017, Invoice to Gallery 91 from The Caxton Press, 31 October 1959.

<sup>95</sup> “Gallery 91,” *Canta* (24 February 1959), located in G91.

<sup>96</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

*Home and Building* reported that there was no hanging fee at Gallery 91, especially in consideration of the financial limitations of younger artists.

“Gallery 91,” 101.

<sup>97</sup> This was novel in the late 1950s, and was due to the establishment of as dealer galleries throughout the country.  
Wilkinson, 2.

which few painters will attempt to use [sic]”.<sup>98</sup> It was the Brookes’ confident recommendation of Coley which assisted in establishing his public profile.

Cultivating public taste, was, of course, an attempt to build a contemporary art market in Christchurch. Andre had explained to the *Home and Building* magazine that Gallery 91 would promote what was not necessarily popular or currently selling in Christchurch.<sup>99</sup> At this very early stage of a developing New Zealand art market, the Brookes were successful in providing artists with at least some income for their trade – as Gallery 91’s receipt books show.<sup>100</sup> Trumic claimed that Gallery 91 was the “first time a professional galley opened up and people paid money [for contemporary art].”<sup>101</sup> However, in addition to the financial reward, an artists’ prestige was built by having their artwork in circulation. As Christchurch’s first full-time dealer, Gallery 91 pioneered the dealer’s role by placing artworks in private and public collections.

Regardless of Baverstock’s disapproval of contemporary art,<sup>102</sup> New Zealand art produced in this period and sold by the Brookes, still reached the public art gallery’s collection. In June and October of 1959 the Canterbury Public Library purchased Helen Brown’s *Black Day* from her solo exhibition,<sup>103</sup> and three significant works from McCahon’s solo exhibition.<sup>104</sup> These artworks, secured by O’Reilly, eventually became part of the public art gallery’s collection; in 2001 artworks owned by the Canterbury Public Library that had been acquired through O’Reilly’s collection policy for the Christchurch City Council were transferred to the RMAG collection.<sup>105</sup> In addition, another of McCahon’s works which was purchased from Gallery 91 was accepted to the RMAG collection: O’Reilly lead a campaign to raise the funds to purchase *Tomorrow will be the same but not as this is*, 1958-9 – shown at McCahon’s solo exhibition. O’Reilly intended to present the painting as a gift to the RMAG. Although initially rejected by Baverstock, the campaign was renewed in 1962 and the

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<sup>98</sup> Nelson Kenny, “Talented Painter: John Coley’s Exhibition,” *The Press* (14 August 1959), located in G91.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> MB198, BBP, box 1, ref. no. 0013, Receipt books.

<sup>101</sup> Trumic and Wadsworth, Interview, 1 December 2011.

<sup>102</sup> Warren Feeney, “‘Doing the Right Thing’: William Sykes Baverstock and the Arts in Canterbury 1943-1969,” *Journal of New Zealand Art History* 30 (2009): 37-39.

<sup>103</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0012, Artist alphabetical file cards.

<sup>104</sup> O’Reilly purchased *Red and Black Landscape*, 1959, the set of four *Northland Drawings*, 1959, and *Elias will he come to save him*, 1959, for the Library in October and December 1959.

Ken Hall, “A Progressive Champion,” 65.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 67.

painting was finally received by the Christchurch City Council in December that year. *Tomorrow will be the same but not as this is* was the first McCahon artwork to enter the RMAG collection.<sup>106</sup>

The Brookes also developed appreciation for contemporary art through their accompanying educational programme at Gallery 91. During 1959 the gallery hosted lectures for its subscribers: William Sutton spoke on “Painting” (this included a demonstration) (25<sup>th</sup> May), Mr E.J. Doudney on “Sculpture” (29<sup>th</sup> June), there was a panel discussion entitled “Looking at Pictures” (25<sup>th</sup> August 1959), and one on “Art and Photography” (27<sup>th</sup> October). While there is no record of attendance to these lectures, Coley recalled that, at a lecture he gave on contemporary art, there were “maybe 20 people” present.<sup>107</sup> In addition to the scheduled lectures, there was a group of working artists who met in the gallery to paint together on Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm.<sup>108</sup> According to the gallery’s programme, there were also public art classes tutored by Rudolf Gopas.<sup>109</sup>

### **Gallery 91’s Closure**

Gallery 91 lasted only ten months and closed at the end of November 1959.<sup>110</sup> Coley maintained that the reason for Gallery 91’s closure was: “[l]ack of buyers, [...] it was a struggle. There was a market for contemporary art, but most of the market was for landscapes in the classical English school that the Canterbury School of Art taught at that time.”<sup>111</sup> Even though the Brookes had bravely informed the *Home and Building* magazine that they

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<sup>106</sup> The painting cost 65 guineas and the financial contributors included Olivia Spencer Bower, Doris Lusk, Margaret and Selwyn Hamblett, Frank Gross, David Langley, Leo Bensemman, John Summers and O’Reilly himself. For further information see:

Hall, “A Progressive Champion,” 65-66.

<sup>107</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>108</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0018, “Membership Programme June to January.” “Gallery 91,” 101.

<sup>109</sup> Children’s (age eight to fourteen years) painting classes were on a Saturday morning, while adult painting classes happened on a Saturday afternoon. According to the gallery programme, Gopas was the tutor for the period from June to November 1959.

MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0018, “Membership Programme June to January.”

<sup>110</sup> There is speculation regarding the gallery’s length of operation: ten months, closing in November, or eleven months, closing in December. Feeney stated that Gallery 91 closed in December 1959, possibly because of *The Press* reported that it was to close at the end of the year. However, Gallery 91 closed at the end of November: as explained by the Brookes in a letter to J. Michels.

Feeney, *The Radical*, 107.

“Gallery 91 to Close,” *The Press* (13 November 1959): 15.

MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to J. Michels from the Brookes, 8 March 1960.

<sup>111</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

“want[ed] art, not business”,<sup>112</sup> business was, of course, needed to ensure the gallery’s survival.

However, the gallery’s closure coincided with an opportunity for the Brookes to continue their support for contemporary art – without the financial risk – at an established organisation.<sup>113</sup> In November 1959, the CSA offered the Brookes the position of Secretary-Manager when Baverstock resigned.<sup>114</sup> Understanding their effective working relationship, the CSA’s offer was to appoint the Brookes as a team.<sup>115</sup> The CSA council were impressed by the initiatives they took with Gallery 91 and were excited about their future prospects with such a couple on board.<sup>116</sup> Confident that the Brookes were the right team to lead the CSA with their innovative practise in arts management, the council agreed to continue Gallery 91’s programme at the Durham Street gallery. Gallery 91’s memberships were transferred, a small room was allocated for the storage of paintings from Gallery 91, and the “continuous” exhibition would also continue there.<sup>117</sup>

While a measure of Gallery 91’s success is seen in the CSA’s confidence in the Brookes, it is also shown in the artists’ reaction to the dealer gallery’s closure – which was sorely felt. The Brookes’ wrote to Gallery 91’s members thanking them for their support, explaining that their membership could continue at the CSA and informing them that Gallery 91 was to close at the end of “this month” – November 1959.<sup>118</sup> In reply to this letter, the Brookes received feedback that lamented the loss of Gallery 91. Louise Henderson, an Auckland artist, wrote:

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<sup>112</sup> “Gallery 91,” 103.

<sup>113</sup> Coley explained that the Brookes transferred to the CSA because of the “reliable income”.

Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>114</sup> Feeney, “The Canterbury Society of Arts 1880-1996,” 173-76.

This position of Secretary has been defined as Secretary-Manager; a position which was later termed the Director (in New Zealand art institutions).

Tony Mackle, “The Man for the Job,” *Journal of New Zealand Art History* 26 (2005): 58-59.

<sup>115</sup> The CSA meeting minutes record that the position was offered to the couple, but Andre choose that the position “be held in his name, not jointly with that of his wife”. Though no reason for this request is recorded, the CSA were insightful in their recognition that the couple were most effective as a team. (This joint-offer is addressed in Chapter 2 of this thesis.)

Canterbury Society of Arts Archive (CSAA), Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 7 and 17 November 1959.

<sup>116</sup> In light of the preceding footnote, when the CSA minutes recorded the council’s “regret at the closing of Gallery 91, [their] appreciation of what it has done in art, and [their] pleasure in the appointment of Mr Bruck” – this included Barbara.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 17 November 1959.

<sup>117</sup> But at the CSA, 10% commission was charged to local members, instead of 20% as at Gallery 91. Artists from out of town were still charged 20% for sales.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 17 November 1959 and 16 February 1960.

<sup>118</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Notification of closure letter.

“I am very sorry to hear your gallery has closed [...] it is a great pity”.<sup>119</sup> Additionally, another Auckland painter, Helen Brown, wrote: “how very sad I feel about it. It was a brave venture and both artists and 'the public' will be the poorer for its closing [sic].”<sup>120</sup>

Managing Gallery 91, Barbara had experienced, first hand, the successful operation of a dealer gallery and the importance of a professional support for New Zealand artists – a cause she would devote the next 21 years of her life to. At Gallery 91, Barbara began a progressive career, gathering contacts and knowledge that she would draw on as an effective champion for contemporary New Zealand art. Her new found understanding and deep respect for artists was fundamental to everything she would later achieve. She would continue as a professional arts administrator, editor, craft-market coordinator, spokes-person, committee member, and open a later dealer gallery with the skills she had gained. She would spend her life supporting the artist and establishing their professional place. Barbara Brooke had emerged as an intelligent and empathetic supporter of local artists; her next accomplishment was as the first female Secretary-Manager of Canterbury Society of Arts.

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<sup>119</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to Andre Brooke from Louise Henderson, undated.

<sup>120</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to the Brookes from Helen Brown, 30 November 1959.



## 2

# The Canterbury Society of Arts

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During her employment at the CSA, Barbara Brooke continued to contribute to the professionalization of the arts in Canterbury and New Zealand. The CSA became an environment that helped shape her professional vision; Barbara experienced first-hand that business practise could establish the professional artist. She was employed by the CSA for six years: three alongside Andre, and three as the Secretary-Manager herself.<sup>121</sup> While the Brookes worked as a team, their success was dependent upon Barbara's effective administration skills. The couple's initiatives at the CSA included maintaining their support for New Zealand artists and contemporary practise, while also contributing to a new level of professionalization. But, by 1963, Andre was exhausted and resigned; Barbara assertively pushed herself forward to become the first female Secretary-Manager of the CSA. Finally recognised as a professional individual, she continued to administer the programme and operational of the CSA as a capable and competent art administrator. However, by 1966 she was frustrated by the restricted organisation model of the CSA and longed for the freedom to direct her own private dealer gallery. Alert to new opportunities to support contemporary artists in Christchurch and wider New Zealand, Brooke resigned to pursue her own ambitions in the arts.

With the best of intentions, the Brookes took the position of Secretary-Manager at the CSA in January 1960. In April, Kenny noted the anticipated changes under their leadership: "[t]he Canterbury Society of Arts this year plans greatly to extend its activities, largely continuing the work of the lamented Gallery 91 [...]. It's one-man shows and other exhibitions by small groups of artists will inevitably result in a change of emphasis".<sup>122</sup> The Brookes were determined to continue what they had begun for the Christchurch public and for New Zealand contemporary artists. Correspondence showed that they informed artists they represented in

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<sup>121</sup> Coley explained that the Brookes held the position for 18 months together and then Andre resigned. But, the Brookes were employed from January 1960 until July 1963 (with a 6 month period of unpaid leave), and then Barbara was employed alone from July 1963 until April 1966.

Coley, "Andre Brooke," 4.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 29 January 1960, 28 June 1962, 4 July 1963, and 26 April 1966.

<sup>122</sup> Nelson Kenny, "Society of Arts: Changes Noted At Exhibition," *The Press* (13 April 1960): 14.

Gallery 91 – such as Louise Henderson, Helen Brown, Roy Cowan, Robert Ellis, J. Michels and John Stackhouse – that they aimed to “show the work of good artists from through[out] New Zealand” as well as the CSA member’s works.<sup>123</sup> As the CSA councillors had agreed to, the pottery, prints and paintings of the “continuous exhibition” of contemporary New Zealand art were reassembled at the Durham Street gallery.<sup>124</sup> Gallery 91’s transference to the CSA was officially complete when Barbara’s silk parachute was refitted to the ceiling and classical music resounded through the space.<sup>125</sup>

The management of the CSA was not something that Andre did alone; Barbara herself informed Gordon Brown that, “it needed two to run the [CSA] gallery efficiently”.<sup>126</sup> It was an extremely busy position and Andre – in a letter to Juliet Peter in 1960 – stated that he was “in danger of being buried beneath the records of the Canterbury Society.”<sup>127</sup> As the administrator of Gallery 91, Barbara’s skills were crucial to Andre’s ability to maintain and deliver a more diverse exhibition programme at the CSA in the early 1960s. This fact is reiterated by the CSA council’s appointment of *the couple* to the position of Secretary-Manager;<sup>128</sup> a decision that revealed a recognition of the engrossing role, but also, Andre’s dependency on Barbara’s expertise. Barbara was necessary to Andre’s professional accomplishments, and they were hired as a team.<sup>129</sup>

Although Barbara’s contributions were clearly significant during this period, she was still a willing mentee to her husband. John Simpson – a CSA council member from 1959 to 1976 –<sup>130</sup> explained: “I think she was gaining a sense of what she could do and how to do it. [...] She really had an apprenticeship through that period when she was the right hand of Andre.

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<sup>123</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to Louise Henderson from the Brookes, 18 March 1960; Letter to John Stackhouse from the Brookes, 8 March 1960.

<sup>124</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to Helen Brown from the Brookes, 9 March 1960.

<sup>125</sup> Bromhead, Interview, 13 June 2013.

<sup>126</sup> There is no evidence that Barbara worked full-time alongside Andre during this time. However, the CSA’s offered position to the couple, and this statement by Barbara, prove its possibility.

Barbara Brooke, Interview with Gordon Brown, cited in Brown, *New Zealand Painting*, 52-3.

<sup>127</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to Juliet Peter from the Brookes, 15 March 1960.

<sup>128</sup> The CSA Meeting Minutes record that the position was offered to “Mr and Mrs Bruck”.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 7 and 17 November 1959.

<sup>129</sup> Without Barbara’s administrative support the art society would not have functioned as effectively or professionally as it did during the early 1960s. Some of the comments by the couple’s contemporaries recorded throughout this chapter single out Andre, when, arguably, the role was completed in a joint effort. These comments have been corrected with the author’s insertions. Additionally, though correspondence found in the archives are written with singular pronouns and signed by Andre, it is probable that Barbara typed each one of those letters. Correspondence referenced in this thesis is interpreted as being from both Barbara and Andre; singular pronouns have also been replaced with the author’s insertions.

<sup>130</sup> Feeney, *The Radical*, 186-7.

That's where she learnt the ropes".<sup>131</sup> But, the function of this shared position at the CSA was twofold: Andre depended on Barbara's proficiency, and Barbara continued to be mentored by Andre. Barbara quickly learnt the role of Secretary-Manager, but she would not be fully recognised until Andre resigned and she resolutely took his place.

### **Under the Management of the Brookes: Progressive and Professional**

Succeeding Baverstock – a man generally considered a detractor to modernism –<sup>132</sup> the Brookes lead the CSA into a new era. They consolidated and extended the CSA's commitment to contemporary art, advocated for the 'professional artist', and were inclusive of young and innovative artists. The Brookes also aimed to broaden public taste, raise the standard of professional administration, and build audiences – they provided greater access for the public through their approachability and the CSA's extended operating hours.

Under the leadership of the Brookes the CSA's exhibition programme became much more progressive – showing a greater commitment to modernism and professionalism in the arts. The exhibitions organised by the Brookes signalled their devoted support of contemporary New Zealand artists. For example, in 1961 the programme included solo exhibitions by Nicholas Herber, Frank Gross, Olivia Spencer-Bower and Toss Woollaston, with a group show by Pam Cotton, Julian Royds, Murray Grimsdale, John Gillespie, and Tony Fomison.<sup>133</sup> These exhibitions took place alongside the wider working member's annual exhibitions.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>132</sup> Baverstock, in the words of Coley, was "a stone in the path of progress, [an] immovable boulder. [...H]e resisted change".

Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>133</sup> Little information regarding the CSA's programme for 1960 was found in the archives. There were discussions recorded in the minutes formulating ideas, but these did not eventuate until 1961. For further information on the CSA's programme during the 1960s see:

Feeney, *The Radical*, 107-124.

MB51, William Baverstock Papers, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, ref. 47808, Exhibition catalogue, "Open Exhibition 1961"; ref. 47767, Exhibition catalogues: "Exhibition" by Nicholas Herber, June 1961, and "Frank Gross", July 1961.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 22 August 1961.

<sup>134</sup> Coley explained that the space was "a bit too big for one-person shows"; the smaller gallery at Durham Street was allocated for solo shows. These exhibitions ran from five to ten working days and artists were charged a small rental fee.

Coley, Email correspondence, 4 October 2013.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 16 February 1960.

John Simpson recalled that “suddenly the CSA became far more active, [...having] something worthwhile seeing every month”.<sup>135</sup>

The CSA was also more accessible to contemporary artists – who were treated as professionals. John Simpson, remembered that the Brookes initiated a respect for artists by going directly to them. He explained: “there had been a grudging kind of cooperation between the art societies of Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch, but what Andre [and Barbara] did was to break through that and he [they] went directly to artists instead of negotiating with societies. [...]. So he [they] started arranging exhibitions of people who had never been heard of before in Christchurch, artists from Auckland and Wellington” (with author’s insertions).<sup>136</sup> Though John Simpson specifically remembered that it was Andre who instigated this in the CSA’s programme, it is not unreasonable to assume that Barbara was equally involved in this – considering her establishment of a programme representing leading New Zealand artists from throughout the country in the Brooke Gifford Gallery.

The Brookes’ approach included attentive support to artists, and also, their quest for innovative artwork. For example, Toss Woollaston wrote to the Brookes in February 1960 explaining that he had a successful visit from Tomory who wanted to purchase two of his watercolours of Nelson landscapes for the Auckland public gallery. In the letter, Woollaston attributes the success of these sales to Andre, exclaiming: “[h]ow I thank you for making me start to paint big”.<sup>137</sup> These two paintings and another by Woollaston were freighted to the ACAG by the Brookes in March 1960.<sup>138</sup> In addition, Philip Trusttun explained that he was still at the UCSFA when Andre admired his charcoal drawings and invited him to exhibit at the CSA.<sup>139</sup> Though Trusttun’s memory is of Andre’s appreciation for his work, seeking out innovative artists was a practise that Barbara also pursued and developed in her career. Trusttun was an imaginative and experimental artist who remained in her memory; when the

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<sup>135</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>136</sup> See footnote 129 of this thesis for an explanation regarding these inserts by the author.

*Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to the Brookes from Woollaston, 17 February 1960.

<sup>138</sup> The Brookes also helped Woollaston freight a painting to Melbourne.

MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Copy of the invoice to Woollaston, 15 March 1960; box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to Peter Tomory from the Brookes, 15 March 1960.

<sup>139</sup> Philip Trusttun, Interview, 5 July 2013.

Brooke Gifford Gallery was established, Barbara re-approached Trusttun to exhibit and represent him.<sup>140</sup>

Artists who were interested in modernism responded to the Brookes, often reconsidering their negative perceptions of the CSA. Contrary to their experiences with Baverstock,<sup>141</sup> local contemporary artists were now welcomed and given a much greater opportunity to exhibit at the Durham Street gallery. Artists who had been represented by Gallery 91 joined the CSA as working members: this included, for example, June Black and Woollaston – even though Woollaston had previously considered exhibiting at the Society to be like becoming “a performing parrot”.<sup>142</sup> Coley – as a practicing contemporary artist – recalled that the CSA was a “more accessible and congenial place” with the Brookes in management.<sup>143</sup>

In addition, as they were employed full-time, the couple were able to address the lack of professional administration at the Durham Street gallery:<sup>144</sup> for example, they exercised a more thorough registration practise and organised the CSA’s art collection. John Simpson recalled: “there were large numbers of works leaning up against the walls of the Council Room [also previously Baverstock’s office...]. Sometimes these leaning stacks were nearly a yard deep and gave the appearance of remaining undisturbed for many years.” Simpson remembered that the Brookes not only catalogued the collection, but produced detailed condition reports, arranged conservation, and gained the CSA council’s approval for a newly prepared secure storage space to house the collection.<sup>145</sup> Certainly, Barbara would have been heavily involved in the organisation of this project.

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<sup>140</sup> Barbara began pursuing Trusttun in 1975 – the year the dealer gallery opened. Trusttun finally exhibited at the Brooke Gifford Gallery in 1978 and then again in 1979.

MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0198, Letter to Tina Hos from Brooke, 27 November 1975.

Brooke Gifford Archives (BGA), 11 Cave Terrace, Christchurch, the Brooke Gifford Gallery’s Yearly Planners.

<sup>141</sup> Coley remembered that Baverstock and the City Councillors were dismissive of proposed local contemporary works for the RMDAG; he recalled that they would make “fun of the artworks” over drinks at the Clarendon Hotel. Though this memory is in relation to the RMDAG, Baverstock was the Secretary-Manager of the CSA while he managed the RMDAG.

John Coley, Interview with Feeney, 4 February 2005 and 13 July 2007, cited in Feeney, *The Radical*, 101.

<sup>142</sup> Woollaston became a member in May and June Black in November of 1960. Feeney explained that 130 new members joined the CSA within 6 months of the Brookes’ appointment.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 25 May 1960 and 28 November 1960.

M.T Woollaston, “Life: Art and the Bourgeois Manifesto,” *Tomorrow* 2, no.21 (29 April, 1936): 22, cited in Feeney, *The Radical*, 109.

<sup>143</sup> Coley. “Andre Brooke,” 4.

<sup>144</sup> This was in comparison to Baverstock who held the position part-time.

Feeney, “The Canterbury Society of Arts 1880-1996,” 142, 173.

<sup>145</sup> John Simpson, Correspondence, 1 November 2013.

The Brookes were innovative in their ideas. For example, during a CSA council meeting in June 1960 they broached the subject of an “art periodical”, following their correspondence with Juliet Cowan (Peter).<sup>146</sup> These discussions within the council continued into 1963, and the very first CSA newsletter entered circulation in April 1963 once its subcommittee was established.<sup>147</sup> As an administrator, it is likely that Barbara had an involvement in the CSA bulletins, which may have provided a simple model for her later commitment to publishing a pioneering arts magazine with Leo Bensemann. Administering *The Canterbury Society of Arts Newsletter* surely increased her holistic understanding of the necessity of a professional arts infrastructure – that a magazine could cultivate a market and taste for the work of New Zealand artists.

In addition, the Brookes encouraged greater public accessibility to the CSA. Though previously open to the public irregularly,<sup>148</sup> and described as a place that lacked “signs of life” and simply functioned as “a space for hire”,<sup>149</sup> with the Brookes in management the CSA kept full-time hours. John Simpson explained: “he [Andre, with Barbara,] opened it up so that you could almost pop in anytime of the week and there would be somebody there to talk to” (with author’s insertion).<sup>150</sup> Art was readily accessible to the public; the couple stated: “[w]e are open as a showing gallery daily and we hope to be able to open in the weekends too. This should do something to enliven the interest in Christchurch.”<sup>151</sup>

The Brookes’ also instigated the country’s first contemporary art award; the Hays Art Award was an attempt to further cultivate an appreciation of contemporary New Zealand art and provide support to artists.<sup>152</sup> The Hays Art Award did not solely attract avant-garde painters, but to those who felt constrained in entering the already established Kelliher Art Award

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<sup>146</sup> CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 27 June 1960 and 4 August 1960.

<sup>147</sup> CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 27 June 1960, 4 August 1960, and 21 February 1963. Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu, *Canterbury Society of Arts Newsletter* (17 April 1963) [accessed October 2013]. Available

<http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/multimedia/print/the-canterbury-society-of-arts-magazine/1987-7/>

<sup>148</sup> John Simpson explained that Baverstock spent from 10-12:30 at the CSA, “usually behind locked doors”. Then he would precede to the RMDAG, which he opened to the public from 2pm until 4:30pm.

John Simpson, Correspondence, 1 November 2013.

<sup>149</sup> Coley, Email correspondence, 4 October 2013.

<sup>150</sup> John Simpson also explained that during Baverstock’s employment, the RMDAG, like the CSA, was largely closed.

John Simpson, Correspondence, 1 November 2013.

<sup>151</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to Robert Ellis from the Brookes, 8 March 1960.

<sup>152</sup> The Hays Art Award took place annually from 1960 to 1966. McCredie, 50.

which asked for ‘traditional’ landscapes of New Zealand,<sup>153</sup> the new art award provided modernist artists with an equal opportunity for public exposure and financial gain.

Winning the support of both Messrs Hays Ltd and the CSA council in April 1960,<sup>154</sup> the Brookes advertised the competition throughout New Zealand and arranged for selected entries to be exhibited at the CSA and then the Hays department store in Christchurch.<sup>155</sup> The inaugural exhibition opening and award ceremony took place at the Durham Street gallery on 30 August 1960. Three paintings were selected to share first prize: McCahon’s *Painting*, 1958, Julian Royds’ *Composition*, c.1960, and Francis J. Jones’ *Kanieri Gold Dredge*, c.1960.<sup>156</sup> With this art award, the Brookes modelled a new status for New Zealand contemporary art that led to later contemporary art competitions such as the Manawatu Prize for Contemporary Art and the Benson and the Hedges Art Award.<sup>157</sup>

The Hays Art Award was publicized and popular.<sup>158</sup> The first competition had over 400 entries and was covered in newspapers throughout the country – particularly when McCahon’s abstract artwork, *Painting*, was one of the three winners. Deliberately drawing

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<sup>153</sup> Sir Henry Kelliher founded the competition in 1956 to promote “paintings done of New Zealand, as [he saw] New Zealand and [would] give a prize to anyone who [could] do that”, explained Austen Deans.

Austen Deans, Interview with Warren Feeney, 22 April 1995.

Richard King, *The Kelliher: 67 Award Winning Paintings* (Auckland: Orakau House, 1979) n.p.

<sup>154</sup> The Brookes began negotiations with Messrs Hays Ltd as early as February 1959 – during the operation of Gallery 91. The decision to partner with Hays for the competition was radical for the CSA. John Simpson remembered the council’s reaction: “Hays wanted to be able to display some of their best paintings in the shop window and a lot of people sort of screwed up their nose at that [...]. They didn’t want to have art sullied with commercialism and shown next door to dresses and pots and pans and things.” But the CSA was finally persuaded, and, as Roberts noted, this was the first instance corporate funding was used for the visual arts. It was also, according to Feeney, a display of the CSA’s confidence in the Brookes’ leadership.

MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0015, “Proposed Art Prizes”, negotiations with Hays Ltd, 17 February 1959.

Roberts and Milburn, 76.

John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

Feeney, *The Radical*, 111.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 22 April 1960.

<sup>155</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0015, “Proposed Art Prizes”, negotiations with Hays Ltd, 17 February 1959.

<sup>156</sup> The judges were Tomory, John Simpson and Russell Clark – another lecturer from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts.

Nelson Kenny, “Exhibition Shows Range of N.Z Art,” *The Press* (30 August 1960): 10.

“Art Competition Entries: Selection From 406 For Exhibition,” *The Press* (29 August 1960): 19.

<sup>157</sup> The Manawatu Prize for Contemporary Art and the Benson and the Hedges Art Award were established in 1968.

Warren Feeney, “New Zealand’s Peter McIntyre: A Study of a Popular Artist,” (Unpublished MA Thesis, Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1996) 75-76.

<sup>158</sup> Found in the gallery’s archives, an application for the Kelliher Art Completion with hand written notes recorded the details of the Hays Art Award. This revealed that the Brookes modelled the new award on the Kelliher Art Completion.

MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0015, remodelled “Kelliher Prize Conditions”.

attention to painting as an act of subjective expression, *Painting*'s shared position in first prize resulted in a predictable controversy.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, John Simpson reminisced that the competition – and particularly its display in the Hays department store – meant that the Brookes were “taking art to everybody [...], art wasn't confined just to a few places [sic].”<sup>160</sup>

### **Andre Brooke's Resignation**

The Brookes' contributions to the CSA came at a cost; they were over-worked. Baverstock's own overloaded part-time role left the CSA's administration in disrepair and the Brookes worked hard to rectify this when they took the position. In a letter to Tomory in March 1960, the Brookes reported that they had stepped into the role at what might have been “the worst time and [..were] overloaded with problems and routine work.”<sup>161</sup> Like many administrators of art institutions during this period, resources were seriously limited.<sup>162</sup> Andre was exhausted by 1962 and requested a leave of absence during a council meeting in June. He asked that the couple's responsibilities be temporarily attended to by his secretary, Mrs Cowper. The CSA council granted the Brookes six months unpaid leave from the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1962 until January 1963.<sup>163</sup> Andre, Barbara and their son, Peter, went on holiday to Tahiti for the duration.<sup>164</sup>

The Brookes returned to Christchurch and their position at the CSA in January of 1963, but Andre announced he wished to resign six months later at the council meeting on 4 July.<sup>165</sup> According to Peter Brooke, this was the time that his parents officially separated; Barbara and Peter moved out to housesit for friends.<sup>166</sup> While there has been speculation as to why

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<sup>159</sup> “Art Competition Entries: Selection From 406 For Exhibition,” 19.

<sup>160</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>161</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, Letter to Peter Tomory from the Brookes, 15 March 1960.

<sup>162</sup> For example, Stewart MacLennan was the first Director of the National Gallery; he was employed there from 1948 to 1968. According to Tony Mackle, MacLennan was also overworked.

Mackle, “The Man for the Job,” 60-61.

<sup>163</sup> CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 28 June 1962.

<sup>164</sup> While Feeney stated that Andre went on holiday to Paris at this time, Peter Brooke explained that Andre's trip to Paris happened after he separated from Barbara.

Feeney, *The Radical*, 111.

Brooke and Rendall, Email correspondence, 2 July 2013.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 4 July 1963.

<sup>166</sup> Andre and Barbara divorced in 1971.

“Copy of Register of Marriage by Officiating Minister,” Digital document from Registration Officer, Births, Deaths & Marriages - Whānautanga, Matenga, Mārenatanga, The Department of Internal Affairs - Te Tari Taiwhenua, Email correspondence, 2 October 2013.

Brooke and Rendall, Email correspondence, 2 July 2013.



Andre resigned – such as his marriage breakup, or his disillusion with the CSA – <sup>167</sup> allegedly, the position at the CSA was not suited to his strengths. When he offered his resignation, Andre explained what was vital *for him* – that he intended to return to Paris to paint.<sup>168</sup> Barbara was present at the council meeting when Andre resigned, and proposed that *she* fill the position.<sup>169</sup> After a four year period of working alongside her husband at Gallery 91 and the CSA, Barbara was now ready to emerge from this partnership and take up the position of CSA Secretary-Manager by herself.

Barbara was a capable and confident art administrator and the CSA council knew this; they *immediately* appointed her at the council meeting on 4 July 1963 because they wanted continuity.<sup>170</sup> John Simpson recalled their decision: “[i]t was just very convenient – it meant that there was somebody they [the CSA council] knew and could trust and could just slip into that position. I don’t think anybody else stood a chance at being appointed.”<sup>171</sup> This was a pragmatic decision on the part of the council: Barbara had proved herself as someone dedicated to the programme, and someone who was efficient and organised administratively. The CSA gave no interviews for the position of Secretary-Manager, even though their national profile could have drawn any number of applicants. Barbara Brooke had the CSA council’s confidence and was appointed according to the irresistible proof of her own merit and work ethics. She began in July 1963 and Andre remained at the CSA until 15 August 1963, when the council allowed the termination of his services to take place.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Brown argued that the Brookes’ role at the CSA was smooth for a time, but then there were complaints that they placed too greater emphasis on contemporary art. Brown explained that the Brookes were accused in May 1961 of favouring Woollaston with a solo exhibition, and that they then withdrew. However, this explanation does not explain why Barbara chose to stay. In addition, while considering the CSA’s confidence in Andre, Feeney argued that his request for leave and his resignation were because of personal circumstances: such as, his failed marriage and his own art practise.

Brown, *New Zealand Painting*, 52-3.

Feeney, *The Radical*, 111.

<sup>168</sup> Andre left for Paris after he resigned from the CSA: he was interviewed by *The Auckland Star* in March 1964 and explained that he had recently returned to New Zealand from a five month trip to Paris, and that he was on his way to London.

“Art Must Relate to the Universe,” *The Auckland Star* (19 March 1964), located in Auckland City Art Gallery, Ikon Gallery Archive on loan from the Don Wood Estate, box 1, folder 9.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 4 July 1963.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> At the same council meeting that Andre resigned and Barbara put forward her proposal, the council members announced that Barbara would fill the position.

Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>172</sup> CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 26 July 1963.

Asserting her own right for this position, Barbara anticipated and led social change in Canterbury. As an emerging feminism of the 1960s increasingly challenged the gender roles in New Zealand society, women's traditional domestic place was critiqued against their evolving professional employment.<sup>173</sup> As the first female Secretary-Manager of the CSA, Brooke was representative of the changes taking place for New Zealand women – who were returning to the workforce after being banished again to the domestic sphere after World War II.<sup>174</sup> In fact, Barbara's appointment was followed by other women who were to hold the title of Director, such as Annella MacDougall in 1975 and Nola Barron from 1976 to 1986.<sup>175</sup>

However, though Barbara was promptly employed by the CSA, her appointment was only temporary at first. The council appointed her to “carry on as Acting Secretary”.<sup>176</sup> Though the temporary position may have been initiated by Brooke,<sup>177</sup> the lengthy period she held it – a year and a half –<sup>178</sup> illustrated an apprehension to break tradition and have a woman in this role. Arguably, the CSA were dubious of appointing a woman for the first time to the role of Secretary-Manager.

While working in partnership with Andre at the CSA, Barbara's individual contributions were to some extent obscured by those of her husband – as they had been at Gallery 91. The CSA's employment of the Brookes as a pair not only revealed their recognition of Andre's professional dependence on Barbara, it also demonstrated that she was still perceived as being ‘part of Andre’. Barbara's efforts were still allocated to her husband: for example, it was he who received the salary for their work and though she was also present at council

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<sup>173</sup> MacDonald, “Mid-Century Rumblings: 1940s and 1950s,” 143-145.

<sup>174</sup> This is explained by the New Zealand artist, Vivian Lynn, when she recalled her experience as a child during the war: “I grew up seeing both parents working at jobs and then sharing child-rearing and family chores [...] There was value placed on women's work because it was politically expedient [...]. But social values changed after the WAR [sic]”. She explained that it was then that woman had to become simply “wives and mothers again [sic]”.

“New Zealand Feminist Artists: Vivian Lynn,” *Broadsheet: New Zealand's Feminist Magazine* no.110 (June, 1983) 32.

<sup>175</sup> Feeney, *The Radical*, 187.

<sup>176</sup> CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 4 July 1963.

<sup>177</sup> Barbara was employed as ‘Acting-Secretary’ because she informed the council that she would fill the position until she left to join Andre in Paris. As Barbara and Andre had already separated, this explanation of Barbara's could have been to ensure she given a chance at the position.

Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> It was December 1964 that Barbara was officially appointed as Secretary-Manager. CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 21 December 1964.

meetings, her name was not recorded as so.<sup>179</sup> Barbara's role between January 1960 and early July 1963 at the CSA was still in the "shadow of Andre."<sup>180</sup>

Barbara's commitment to the collaborative role with her husband had paid off when, she was officially recognised as a professional arts manager – an act signified by the documentation of her name. The demise of her marriage only seemed to increase Barbara's motivation and determination. Coley explained that as a result of the separation, she became "strongly independent and authoritative, commanding and bold". Coley believed this boldness helped in her decision to replace her husband as Secretary-Manager.<sup>181</sup> In spite of remaining officially unnoticed at council meetings, her attendance meant she could propose that she fill the role of Secretary-Manager on 4 July 1963. Finally, Barbara was officially appointed as Secretary-Manager on 21 December 1964; her recognition as a professional began with letters that closed in her own name as "Acting Secretary" – a contrast to typing letters that were signed by Andre – and was completed when her name began to be regularly recorded in CSA council meetings minutes.<sup>182</sup> Brooke was now accepted as an individual professional.

### **Barbara Brooke the Professional Administrator**

Brooke focused on her administrative role as a specialist. The CSA minutes recorded during the period reveal the various tasks with which she was involved: corresponding on behalf of the council, administering various public applications, liaising between the council and artists or alternative organisations, documenting expenses for projects, arranging house hold tasks, administering exhibitions, and preparing financial accounts.<sup>183</sup> Coley recalled: "she had all the secretarial skills, [...she was] trained as a secretary, [...she] could do short hand, [and]

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<sup>179</sup> Officially the CSA employed Andre and paid him the salary.

Barbara Brooke, Interview with Gordon Brown, cited in Brown, *New Zealand Painting*, 52-3.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 28 June 1962, 4 July 1963.

<sup>180</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>181</sup> Coley explained that keeping her job at the CSA was also a financial necessity for Barbara – she needed to provide for herself and Peter when Andre left. Additionally, it was through her marriage separation that Barbara broke away from the traditional domestic role of a woman and became the provider for her son.

Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>182</sup> Auckland City Art Gallery, Ikon Gallery Archive on loan from the Don Wood Estate, box 2, folder 9, Letter to Don Wood from Brooke, Acting Secretary, 12 September 1963.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 28 June 1962, 4 July 1963, 21 December 1964.

<sup>183</sup> Examples of these responsibilities can be found in the following CSA Council Meeting Minutes.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 1 August 1963, 5 September 1963, 25 September 1963, 10 October 1963, 7 November 1963, 7 May 1964.

type [...]. She had learned the systems, about selling, receiving, packing, organising and opening and publicising; she was very perceptive and highly motivated”.<sup>184</sup>

From July 1963 to April 1966, Brooke effectively administered an ever increasing programme and a quickly modernising and professionalising art society. She supported the CSA council members as they sought to present exhibitions of New Zealand and international contemporary art.<sup>185</sup> For example, John Oakley, a painting lecturer from the UCSFA, was a member of CSA council while Brooke was Secretary-Manager; in February and March 1965, “100 New Zealand Painters” was organised by the Visual Arts Committee of the CSA council and curated by Oakley, its chairman. This exhibition was part of the Christchurch Pan Pacific Arts Festival and held at RMAG.<sup>186</sup> John Simpson recalled that “at that time on the CSA council there was some very powerful strong active figures and the members of the council were becoming far more involved in organising exhibitions.”<sup>187</sup>

The CSA provided a vibrant exhibition programme that was available to the Christchurch public daily through Brooke’s full-time attendance at the gallery.<sup>188</sup> Contemplating the open hours while Brooke was Secretary-Manager, John Simpson remembered that, even “[w]hen there were no exhibition for the public to attend, the gallery was up and running from 9:00am to about 5:30pm and Saturday from about 10:00 to 1:00 unless closed for hanging and judging sessions [sic]”.<sup>189</sup>

Furthermore, this sense of accessibility was amplified by Brooke’s own personality. Coley explained: “[she had] a very bubbly personality, [and] a great smile. [...] She never fussed around the back office when you went into the gallery. [She would greet you:] ‘hello John, how are you? What do you think of this?’ She would engage you. That’s enormous [...]

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<sup>184</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>185</sup> For example, the CSA hosted the Queen Elizabeth II Arts exhibition, “Contemporary Italian Sculpture”, in November 1965; an exhibition which John Simpson explained as being encouraged through the connections of the CSA council member, Tom Taylor.

John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

For further information on the CSA’s programme during the 1960s see: Feeney, *The Radical*, 107-124.

<sup>186</sup> CSA Meeting Minutes, 21 December 1964, cited in Feeney, *The Radical*, 113. CSAA, box 4, Exhibition catalogue, “100 New Zealand Painters”.

<sup>187</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>188</sup> John Simpson, Correspondence, 1 November 2013.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

businesses depend on engaging with [their customers...]. She was good”.<sup>190</sup> Brooke was personable, welcoming and a gifted networker. While at the CSA, she continued to build relationships with artists, art lovers, Christchurch’s professional community, and the New Zealand arts community at large.

From as early as 1963, Brooke’s already full workload was increased by her administrative support of the CSA’s new building project. While the construction of the new gallery was an important milestone for the Society’s modernisation,<sup>191</sup> it played a deciding role in Brooke’s choice to leave the CSA. For this project, the CSA now had a newly appointed building-subcommittee and a newly appointed president – Stewart Mair.<sup>192</sup> The building project was an all-consuming objective for the Society and a large amount of administration took place coordinating the shift from Durham Street to Gloucester Street. This work was not only conducted by Rusty Laidlaw – the appointed secretary for the project – but also by Brooke.<sup>193</sup> The project spanned over four years, and on 8 March 1968, the completed new CSA building at 66 Gloucester Street opened.<sup>194</sup> But, by this time Brooke was no longer Secretary-Manager.

### **Barbara Brooke’s Resignation**

Arguably, Brooke’s professional development during her time at the CSA served to increase her tenacity; by 1966 she had out-grown the position of Secretary-Manager. She wrote a letter tendering her resignation on the 18 April.<sup>195</sup> In some ways, it may seem a contradiction that Brooke, the serious arts manager, resigned from the CSA, the prominent art organisation

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<sup>190</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>191</sup> The Annual General Meeting minutes recorded that “[o]ur buildings are in a shocking state; are we to stay and to repair [the current building...or] are we to go forward, to work hard for a new building, which would be more than a milestone in the history of our progress and a thrilling ideal for all to work to [sic]”. CSAA, box 63, Annual General Meeting Minutes, 26 November 1963.

<sup>192</sup> The building sub-committee was established in March 1963; Mair was nominated President of the CSA council in September 1964.

CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 7 March 1963, 10 September 1964.

<sup>193</sup> Laidlaw was appointed Secretary for the CSA building project in January 1965.

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu, *Canterbury Society of Arts Newsletter* (18 January 1965); *Canterbury Society of Arts News*, no.1 (May 1965) [accessed October 2013]. Available <http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/multimedia/print/the-canterbury-society-of-arts-magazine/1987-7/>

<sup>194</sup> Feeney, *The Radical*, 117.

<sup>195</sup> Laidlaw then succeeded Brooke as Secretary-Manager. CSAA, box 63, Meeting Minutes, 26 April 1966.

in Christchurch which was professional and contemporary for its time in the 1960s.<sup>196</sup> Her decision can only be explained as a conviction – which was acted upon and – informed by several circumstances.

Now with seven years' experience as an arts manager – four with Andre and three by herself – Brooke longed to manage an organisation as she chose. After emerging from under the “shadow of Andre”<sup>197</sup> – as discussed earlier in the chapter – Brooke was increasingly frustrated by a working environment that was overshadowed by the CSA council. She was ready for a new challenge. John Simpson remembered: “towards the end of her tenure – she changed. Her attitude changed. Instead of being rather tentative, she suddenly became authoritative.” In addition, John Simpson recognised that Brooke “felt that the CSA was not prepared to take the next step and set its-self up with a professional director.”<sup>198</sup>

Discontented with the Society's organisation model – where the councillors were the decision makers in an organisation that had its origins in the Royal Academy, and was, ultimately, still based on Victorian principles – Brooke was no longer happy to be dictated to. Fraser had noted in *Home and Building* in 1957 that a Society was an “unwieldy organism [...] under the control of a municipal council [and unable to] be expected to show the daring, the initiative, [and] the independence of the smaller gallery”.<sup>199</sup> This may have rung true for Brooke in the 1960s, as Macfarlane recalled that: “after she left the CSA we used to go round looking at possible places for a dealer gallery.”<sup>200</sup>

As it has been previously documented, Brooke's reason for resigning was her frustration with the new president, Mair, and his approach. According to Malcom Ott – a contemporary member of the CSA council – Mair did “not find favour with Barbara”.<sup>201</sup> As an astute and experienced businessman who had worked internationally in the wool trade, been the chairman of Hay's-Wright Stephenson Limited and was a Director of the Canterbury Frozen

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<sup>196</sup> Feeney explained that at the time the CSA was an organisation that was in the process of building a new gallery to realise its visions: to support New Zealand art, design, and architecture. Warren Feeney, Conversation, 10 October 2014.

<sup>197</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ross Fraser, “An Independent Gallery,” *Home and Building* (December, 1957): 44.

<sup>200</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>201</sup> Feeney paraphrases Malcom Ott.

Malcom Ott, Interview with Feeney, 30 June 2006, cited in Feeney, *The Radical*, 115.

Meat Company,<sup>202</sup> Mair possibly represented a business focus too driven by commerce for Brooke. John Simpson described Mair as a person who was “very wealthy, very influential and [... a man who] stood head and shoulders above the rest of us in terms of his connections with Government and Government agencies. [...] He was the ideal person to become the Chairman of the CSA [...]; the CSA [...] and Christchurch benefited enormously [from him].”<sup>203</sup>

Certainly, Mair’s methods ran counter to Brooke’s ethos, which were solidarity and the importance of the individual. John Simpson recalled: “I think she had a person to person way of working and so she preferred to talk directly to an artist.”<sup>204</sup> In fact, Brooke’s strength as an arts professional came from her connections throughout the local and national arts community. Brooke had an inter-relational approach to her work. Her ability to relate with artists and those interested in the arts resulted in an established network that she would call upon later in her career when she published an early arts magazine and founded a contemporary art dealer gallery.

While there were instances which may have encouraged Brooke to leave the CSA, it was a period in her career when she developed a greater understanding of business and commerce. Like all art societies, the CSA generated its revenue from its annual membership fees and the sale of artwork.<sup>205</sup> As the Secretary-Manager, Brooke’s experience at the CSA would have provided her with a valuable and first-hand knowledge of the arts as a business. Amongst other administrative tasks she would have balanced the books each year in order to ensure the CSA’s continued operation as a business.

Additionally, during her period of employment at the CSA, Brooke associated with council members who were notable professionals in the art scene of Canterbury. Alongside John Simpson, the head of the UCSFA, those on the CSA council during Brooke’s time included Ron O’Reilly the contemporary art champion,<sup>206</sup> and Paul Pascoe, Stewart Minson, Peter Beaven and Miles Warren – leading local architects whose livelihood came from a profession

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<sup>202</sup> Mair had worked in Australia, the United States, and New Zealand.

“Obituary: Mr Stewart Ernest Mair,” *The Press* (11 December 1969): 20.

<sup>203</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Feeney, Conversation, 10 October 2014.

<sup>206</sup> See page 17 of this thesis for more information regarding Ron O’Reilly.

based on visual creativity and an understanding of commerce.<sup>207</sup> Essentially, the working environment of the CSA advocated professional practise in the arts – particularly through necessity and in a business sense.

Certainly, though she may have struggled with Mair’s approach as the president of the CSA, Brooke had been influenced by his business acumen. She would later combine an understanding of business practise with her support of the contemporary artist in the establishment of the Mollett Street Market – for the sale of craft, and the Brooke Gifford gallery – which specialised in dealing contemporary New Zealand art. Expanding what she had already learnt during Gallery 91, Brooke embraced the concept that coordinating a business could establish the professional artist.

Now in her early 40s, the CSA represented a period in Brooke’s career when she realised her professional vision: the desire to direct her own private dealer gallery. Brooke now longed for an employment where she had ownership. John Simpson recalled: “with her growing confidence [...] and with the talk in the air for the need for dealer galleries, professional dealer galleries [...], those two things meant that suddenly Barbara , [...] was [no longer] interested at staying on at the CSA, she regarded it as yesterday’s institution. [...] She had a belief that her future lay elsewhere.”<sup>208</sup> Highlighting her particular objective, is an article found in an envelope of preserved cuttings labelled “Barbara Brooke’s newspaper clippings” in the CSA archives at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu. Saved as important, an article by Hamish Keith reported the need for private galleries in Christchurch.<sup>209</sup>

With her resignation from the CSA, Brooke revealed herself to be a woman of courage and momentum. Kirsten Macfarlane, who boarded with Brooke as a teenager in 1970s, recalled: “she really was a remarkable woman; one who was willing to plough ahead despite living in such a conservative city.”<sup>210</sup> Brooke’s revolutionary characteristics were also perceived by

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<sup>207</sup> Minson, Henning-Hansen and Dines were the chosen architects for the new CSA building in Gloucester Street.

Feeney, “Appendix I: CSA Council Members 1880 – 1996,” *The Radical*, 186.

John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>208</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>209</sup> Hamish Keith, “Local demand could exceed the supply,” *The Auckland Star* (22 July 1965): 18. CSAA, box 30, Barbara Brooke’s newspaper clippings.

<sup>210</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane is the eldest daughter of Judith Gifford and Quentin Macfarlane. Kirsten Macfarlane, Email correspondence, 26 June 2013.



her future friend and business partner, Beaven, who articulated: “I think that she was a person of energy reaching out grasping opportunities”.<sup>211</sup>

Brooke resigned from the CSA as an acknowledged professional individual, as woman who had realised her future ambitions, and would take pragmatic steps to make them a reality. She was no longer able to be described as “diffident”,<sup>212</sup> but rather, as a person who forged her own way with determination. Brooke would pursue a professional arts career: her next accomplishments took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and included publishing an early visual arts magazine in New Zealand, devoting many volunteer hours to numerous art committees, and co-founding Christchurch’s first craft market.

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<sup>211</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>212</sup> This was John Simpson’s description of Brooke during her period of work alongside Andre. John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

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## **Barbara Brooke the Arts Professional: *Ascent*, Councils, and The Mollett Street Market**

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Brooke practiced her devotion to contemporary New Zealand art in her professional and private life. She used her private residence to: host gatherings of artists and their devotees, provide accommodation or employment for artists, and to exhibit her extensive private art collection. In addition, she positioned herself at the forefront of the development of professionalism across the country. She attended the national Arts Conference in 1970, she was elected on to the Canterbury Regional Arts Federation, and she was involved with the New Zealand Print Council. In her role at The Caxton Press, Brooke edited the *New Zealand Local Government: News, Comment and Discussion* and co-edited *Ascent: A Journal of the Visual Arts in New Zealand*. *Ascent* was a new professional visual arts magazine that provided a documented context for artist's practise and a critical understanding of contemporary New Zealand art – to both a national and international audience.

Brooke was a woman of action. During the early 1970s, she also established a pioneering craft market in Christchurch with her colleagues – the Mollett Street Market. This was coordinated as a unique and supportive environment where New Zealand craftspeople could sell their wares. It was not only Brooke's commitment to the arts which illustrated her passionate devotion to the success of the professional contemporary artist, but also her activism. Brooke was interested in politics and social engagement: she was a member of the Christchurch Transport Board, and her fight for the continuation of *Ascent* and the Mollett Street Market were matched by her advocacy for woman's voice.

### ***Ascent: A Journal of the Visual Arts in New Zealand***

Brooke and Leo Bensemann launched *Ascent: A Journal of the Visual Arts in New Zealand* in November 1967. Both of Harry H. Tombs' publications – *Arts in New Zealand* or *The Arts in New Zealand*, and the *Arts Year Book* – had finished nearly two decades earlier. Brooke and

Bensemman would continue what Tombs had begun,<sup>213</sup> filling the void for a New Zealand art publication. At this time the New Zealand art scene was thriving, and the editors of *Ascent* intended to promote what they called the “New Zealand image”.<sup>214</sup> Peter Simpson – author of *Fantastica: The World of Leo Bensemman* – recalled that in the 1960s a visual arts magazine was urgently necessary. He explained: “the whole scene was in movement, people were coming back from overseas – like Patrick Hanly, Ralph Hotere, Gordon Walters and Don Peebles – and the public art galleries were taking an interest in their work [...]. The dealer galleries were starting to spring up, and there was a real buzz in the air”.<sup>215</sup>

The Caxton Press – who employed both Brooke and Bensemman – was approached in 1965 by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council (QEII Arts Council), who asserted that New Zealand needed an arts journal but they were unsure exactly what it should contain.<sup>216</sup> What would become *Ascent*, was part of a comprehensive plan by central Government to nurture contemporary art practise in New Zealand. It was the QEII Arts Council’s agenda to increase the awareness of and demand for New Zealand art both here and overseas.<sup>217</sup> Robin Albarn – a fellow colleague and the son-in-law of one of The Caxton Press’ major shareholders – remembered: “this was the time they were starting to give [... the arts] money.”<sup>218</sup>

Two years after the QEII Arts Council’s initial approach, The Caxton Press began to publish *Ascent*. The Caxton Press was the leading New Zealand publisher and commercial printer; it

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<sup>213</sup> *Arts in New Zealand* finished in 1946 and the *Arts Year Book* in 1951. Neither of Harry H. Tombs’ publications specialised in New Zealand art: *Arts in New Zealand / The Arts in New Zealand* and the *Arts Year Book* featured music, drama, film, poetry and the visual arts in their articles. *Ascent* would begin as a magazine specialising in the visual arts, but, the need for funding did not allow it to continue as such.

*The Arts in New Zealand* 17, no.16 (January-February, 1946).

Eric Lee Johnston, et al. ed., *Arts Year Book* 7 (Wellington: The Wingfield Press, 1951).

<sup>214</sup> As explained in “Notes”.

“Notes,” *Ascent: A Journal of the Arts in New Zealand* 1, no.2 (July, 1968): 83.

<sup>215</sup> Peter Simpson, Interview, 10 June 2013.

Peter Simpson, *Fantastica: The World of Leo Bensemman* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2011) 120.

<sup>216</sup> Noel Waite, “Adventure and Art: Literature Publishing in Christchurch, 1934-95,” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1996) 111.

<sup>217</sup> QEII Arts Council formed in 1964 to foster and encourage the arts in New Zealand. In the 1960s the Arts Council’s objective was to “build [...] an increased awareness of and demand for the work of New Zealand artists”.

Hamish Keith, *Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand Policy Discussion Paper* (Wellington: Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, 1978) 7-9.

Mary Barr, Mandy Bill, Michael Volkerling (ARTS – Arts Research and Training Services), *Marketing the Visual Arts in New Zealand* (Wellington: Creative New Zealand, 1998) 12.

<sup>218</sup> Albarn was also a shareholder from 1964 and his father-in-law was Dennis Donovan.  
Robin Albarn, Telephone conversation, 26 September 2014.

was committed to the spirit of nationalism and its expression through the arts.<sup>219</sup> It provided an outlet for New Zealand writers and raised the standard in printing and book design in the country. The publishing company was also committed to promoting New Zealand art – they published every exhibition catalogue for The Group from 1940,<sup>220</sup> and included reproductions of art in their literary journal, *Landfall: A New Zealand Quarterly*.<sup>221</sup> *Landfall* was published at The Caxton Press from 1947, it was a quarterly edited by Charles Brasch, then later by Robin Dudding, and printed by Leo Bensemann.<sup>222</sup> Fitting with the devotion to contemporary New Zealand art of those at The Caxton Press, publishing *Ascent* was an ideal opportunity.

Brooke had been employed at The Caxton Press since July 1966 – in editorial positions that reflected both her interest in art and politics. She gained a part-time position editing the monthly subscription magazine,<sup>223</sup> *New Zealand Local Government: News, Comment and Discussion*.<sup>224</sup> Alborn recalled: “there was nothing there as a voice for the local authorities of New Zealand to be informed of what other local authorities were doing or how they were treating new legislation.”<sup>225</sup> Brooke replaced the original Editor, Antony Alpers.<sup>226</sup>

Brooke was selected as the right person for this role; Alborn remembered that she was hired because “Leo recognised her competence.”<sup>227</sup> Alborn attributed Brooke’s employment to her

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<sup>219</sup> Waite, “Adventure and Art,” 109.

<sup>220</sup> Simpson, *Fantastica*, 64.

<sup>221</sup> Contemporary New Zealand artists who feature in *Landfall* during 1967 and 1971 include: Leo Bensemann, Don Binney, Barry Cleavin, Tony Fomison, Murray Grimsdale, Patrick Hanly, Ralph Hotere, Michael Illingworth, Quentin Macfarlane, Michael Smither, Philip Trusttum, and Gordon Walters (some of which were cover designs).

*Landfall: A New Zealand Quarterly. Index, Volumes 21 – 25, 1967-1971* (Christchurch: Caxton Press) 4-23.

<sup>222</sup> Robin Dudding was appointed when Brasch retired in 1966.

Dennis Donovan, Interview with Waite, 24 August 1993, cited in Waite, “Adventure and Art: Literature Publishing in Christchurch,” 113.

<sup>223</sup> Brooke’s interest in politics was recounted by her niece.

Rendall, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>224</sup> *New Zealand Local Government* had been published at The Caxton Press since 1965; Brooke is recorded as joining the editorial staff in the August issue of 1966.

Noel Waite, *Landmarks in New Zealand Publishing, Adventure and Art: The Caxton Press* (Wellington: National Library of New Zealand, 1998) 4, 12.

“Editorial Changes at Caxton,” *New Zealand Local Government: News, Comment and Discussion* 2, no.7 (August 1966): 5.

<sup>225</sup> Robin Alborn, Interview, 23 April 2013.

<sup>226</sup> Antony Alpers had been employed in 1963 as general Editor of The Caxton Press; when he left for Canada Brooke replaced him as Editor of *New Zealand Local Government* and Robin Dudding replaced him as general Editor – which included relieving Charles Brasch of his responsibilities of editing *Landfall*.

Dennis Donovan, Interview with Waite, 24 August 1993, cited in Waite, “Adventure and Art,” 109.

“Editorial Changes at Caxton,” *New Zealand Local Government* 2, no.7 (August 1966): 7.

<sup>227</sup> Alborn, Telephone conversation, 26 September 2014.

networking skills: she “was incredibly personable, [and] had great charm”.<sup>228</sup> Brooke’s talent for interacting with others enabled her to competently continue what Alpers began: to make “a personal call on [...] many authorities throughout New Zealand”.<sup>229</sup> Utilizing her administration and collaborative skills, Brooke was in her element with the responsibility of gathering and editing articles, visiting Government authorities and attending conferences – such as, the annual gatherings of the Municipal Association of New Zealand and New Zealand Counties Association Conferences.<sup>230</sup>

Brooke’s part-time employment at The Caxton Press, her knowledge of artistic practise, and her established relationships throughout the national arts community, placed her in the perfect position to organise a visual arts magazine – an innovation Alborn remembered as Brooke’s doing.<sup>231</sup> While it is unknown to what extent Brooke formulated *Ascent*, it is known that she began as Assistant Editor alongside Bensemann.<sup>232</sup> Brooke’s travels throughout New Zealand for *New Zealand Local Government* enabled her to maintain relationships with artists and art writers. Her friendly nature and gift for interacting were effective in both her editorial roles. Brooke was the energetic drive behind the articles that are found in *Ascent*.<sup>233</sup> McAnergney recalled: “Barbara [...] collected all the words [...] I would imagine that she would have cajoled, [and] persuaded people to write pieces for *Ascent* and [...] that would have involved her going to see them”.<sup>234</sup>

Brooke quickly accumulated greater control in *Ascent*. It was recorded in the third issue (published in April 1969) that she was promoted to Co-Editor. Brooke’s new role in the later issues of *Ascent* gained her greater responsibility as Bensemann was busied by his other obligations at The Caxton Press.<sup>235</sup> In the words of Alborn: “who could be better to edit it

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<sup>228</sup> Alborn, Interview, 23 April 2013.

<sup>229</sup> “Editorial Changes at Caxton,” *New Zealand Local Government* 2, no.7 (August 1966): 7.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

*New Zealand Local Government* 4, no.6 (June 1968): 234.

*New Zealand Local Government* 3, no.7 (July 1967): 258.

<sup>231</sup> Alborn remembered that Brooke was involved in formulating *Ascent*.

Alborn, Telephone conversation, 26 September 2014.

<sup>232</sup> Alborn recalled that, at the time, The Caxton Press had to allocate two magazines to an editor to justify employing them full-time.

*Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> Alborn explained: “through her job as Editor of *New Zealand Local Government*, she got to go to their conferences, which gave her the opportunity to keep in contact, face to face, with artists”.

Alborn, Interview, 23 April 2013.

<sup>234</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>235</sup> Brooke wrote: “I have taken over the correspondence and organising for the next two issues [4 and 5]”. MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to Patrick Hutchings from Brooke, 28 Aug 1969.

than Barbara Brooke [...] she had a bloody good brain, she was entrepreneurial and she knew the New Zealand art scene”.<sup>236</sup>

In fact, *Ascent*'s editorial was primarily Brooke's responsibility; the magazine was propelled by her leadership and expertise. Alborn remembered her significant role in the partnership with Bensemann: “I would give her nine out of ten. Leo certainly had some editorial influence because he would see it all as it came through type setting”. Also, “Leo was the printer [...]. If [Barbara] was in trouble she would refer to Leo. [...But,] she [...] was a powerful lady”.<sup>237</sup> These recommendations were added to by Macfarlane, who stated: “somebody like Barbara who was vivacious, very knowledgeable and could organise, what more would you want [from an editor]”.<sup>238</sup>

Bensemann has long been associated with the achievements of The Caxton Press. He began a forty year career with them in 1937 and was a shareholder.<sup>239</sup> He worked as a typographer and graphic artist; for The Caxton Press' journals – *Landfall* and *Ascent* – he was a designer, printer, contributor and editor.<sup>240</sup> While Bensemann was extremely busy, his expertise and involvement with *Ascent* complemented Brooke's. Her efficient organisation skills and knowledge of New Zealand contemporary art suited his knowledge of artists, typography and design.

Notably, Brooke's promotion to Co-Editor of *Ascent* was a marked compliment of her professional competence and determination. The year Brooke was employed at The Caxton Press, she belonged to 13% of New Zealand women in employment who held 'professional' positions, or positions which were considered “new” for females.<sup>241</sup> In short, it was still early for women to be in such careers. With her position at The Caxton Press – an environment

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<sup>236</sup> Alborn, Interview, 23 April 2013.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>239</sup> Bensemann was a practicing artist himself, and he was committed to The Group. He designed and printed all the annual Group catalogues from 1940 – even the final catalogue in 1977. Simpson, *Fantastica*, 64-67.

Alborn, Telephone conversation, 26 September 2014.

<sup>240</sup> Peter Simpson, Interview, 10 June 2013.

Alborn, Interview, 23 April 2013.

<sup>241</sup> Brooke was also part of the 19.9% of married woman in New Zealand who were in employment. Statistics from the 1966 Census, cited in L. Kennedy, “Women in Paid Employment,” *The Changing Role of Women* (Hamilton: Waikato Branch of Society of Research on Women in NZ, 1969) 23-24.

described as male dominated and likely to be chauvinistic –<sup>242</sup> Brooke was again forging the way as a professional woman; she was the first female editor employed at The Caxton Press.<sup>243</sup> Cleavin recalled: “she had presence and [...] intellectually able to keep up with the boys, with a particular form of vitality.”<sup>244</sup> Brooke was also professionally influential to a younger generation of women: for example, she helped Kirsten Macfarlane gain a position at The Caxton Press after high school in 1979.<sup>245</sup>

Brooke’s devotion to contemporary New Zealand artists was fundamental to their exposure in *Ascent*. Brooke’s efforts as an editor included her inclusion of artists that Bensemann was reluctant to support. Peter Simpson explained: “Leo was always very dubious about abstraction. He was quite conservative in his artistic taste [...] he had a definite preference for figurative art – [such as,] landscape. [...] [Ralph] Hotere, for example, is an artist that he did not have much time for”.<sup>246</sup> Certainly, *Ascent* was promoting art which exceeded Bensemann’s tastes. Brooke comprehended and empathised with the shift towards a greater engagement with international arts practise: the move away from Regionalism and Neo-Romanticism – which had begun in the late 1950s – revealed in the work of contemporary New Zealand artists embracing pure abstraction.

Indeed, Bensemann was not a supporter of New Zealand modernism. In fact, he described it as a “strange outlandish fowl”.<sup>247</sup> His dislike is further captured in a letter to Brooke during her overseas holiday in the late 1970s: “the McDougall [Art Gallery] is stuffed full of [...] Hotere, who must be showing at least 500 large [paintings] of crosses [...] covered with crudely stencilled messages [...]. They are boringly repetitive [sic]”.<sup>248</sup> Equally, Bensemann had little time for Tomory, whom he saw as “a foreign invader.”<sup>249</sup> Yet, in spite of

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<sup>242</sup> Peter Simpson, Interview, 10 June 2013.

<sup>243</sup> There was also Jenny Gunby, who was the Editor of *Learning. Educating Children: A Journal for Parents*. But, The Caxton Press did not begin publishing this magazine until 1969.

*Learning. Educating Children: A Journal for Parents* 1, no.1 (March, 1969).

Alborn, Telephone conversation, 26 September 2014.

<sup>244</sup> Cleavin and Copland, Interview, 30 January 2012.

<sup>245</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane recalled: “she was instrumental at getting me a job in Caxton Press. [...] I was printing alongside Leo Bensemann.”

Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>246</sup> Peter Simpson, Interview, 10 June 2013.

<sup>247</sup> Peter Simpson quotes Bensemann in an unpublished address “Fantastica to the Paradise Garden: Aspects of the Art of Leo Bensemann,” The National Library, Wellington, 3 September 1992, cited in Waite, “Adventure and Art,” 88.

<sup>248</sup> Correspondence by Bensemann, Mount Eden, Auckland, Letter to Brooke from Bensemann, 6 July 1979 (reproduced with the kind permission of Cathy Harrington for the Bensemann Estate).

<sup>249</sup> Peter Simpson, Interview, 10 June 2013.

Bensemann's reservations, Tomory still wrote for *Ascent* and Hotere's recent work featured on the cover of *Ascent* No.3 – which also included a review of his recent exhibition.

It was Brooke's broad appreciation of New Zealand art which, not only placed her in the minority within Christchurch, but, permitted non-figurative artworks to feature in *Ascent*. The magazine contained reproduced artworks by artists such as, Shay Docking, John Drawbridge, Roy Good, Quentin Macfarlane, Hanly, Hotere, and Walters. Furthermore, Brooke's admiration of both Hotere and Walters as progressive New Zealand artists was reiterated by her inclusion of them in her stable when she later opened the prestigious Brooke Gifford Gallery. Certainly, it was because of Brooke's influence that these artists were chosen for this early visual arts magazine.<sup>250</sup>

### A Critical Arts Magazine

*Ascent* was unique when produced in the late 1960s; the magazine had a quality which Macfarlane explained as being "before its time".<sup>251</sup> The RMAG's *The Survey* did not begin until Brian Muir was Director in 1971, and *The Bulletin of New Zealand Art History* was not published until 1972; this left only the ACAG's periodical, *The Gallery Quarterly* (published from 1956), and *Arts and Community* (published by Harkland Baker Publishing between 1965 and 1974) as *Ascent*'s comparisons.<sup>252</sup> These two periodicals were simple and non-specialising in the light of *Ascent*. In the late 1960s *The Gallery Quarterly* had a plain format, generally with one informative article,<sup>253</sup> and *Arts and Community* covered the arts broadly with a community rather than a professional focus – it was more of a national 'newsletter' for the arts.<sup>254</sup> In addition, *Ascent* differed from *Landfall* by being a larger size publication,

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<sup>250</sup> Peter Simpson explained: "Leo realised that, as an editor, he had to stretch his boundaries a bit. The new abstract art was attracting people that wanted to write about it [...]. I think that he made an effort." Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Macfarlane, Interview with Dyer, 6 June 1995, cited in Dyer, n.p.

<sup>252</sup> Auckland City Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki. *Gallery Quarterly* [accessed 12 January 2014]. Available <http://www.aucklandartgallery.com/library/gallery-quarterly>  
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu. *Survey* [accessed 12 January 2014]. Available <http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/multimedia/print/the-survey/survey-1-february/>  
*Bulletin of New Zealand Art History* 1 (1972).

University of Canterbury Te Whare Wananga o Waitaha. *Library Catalogue*, "Arts and Community" [accessed 12 January 2014]. Available [http://ipac.canterbury.ac.nz/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=13D93152528FV.102104&profile=a&uri=link=3100006~!16575785~!3100001~!3100002&aspect=basic\\_search&menu=search&ri=1&source=~!culib&term=Arts+and+community&index=ALITITLE#focus](http://ipac.canterbury.ac.nz/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=13D93152528FV.102104&profile=a&uri=link=3100006~!16575785~!3100001~!3100002&aspect=basic_search&menu=search&ri=1&source=~!culib&term=Arts+and+community&index=ALITITLE#focus)

<sup>253</sup> Auckland City Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki. *Gallery Quarterly*.

<sup>254</sup> *Arts and Community* 4, no.8 (September, 1968).



having a new layout, new typeface, and the added aesthetic enhancements of images on a high quality paper – some of which were in colour.<sup>255</sup>

The absence of professional arts criticism and commentary had been described by Tomory as obstructing the development of artistic practise in New Zealand. In 1958 he wrote: “[t]he amateur critic becomes a back patter, mumbling soft words of encouragement to the artist. Serious art can flourish only if there is strong, informed criticism to sweep away the dross and explore what is good.”<sup>256</sup> This was still a concern in 1963, when Wystan Curnow observed that “our art criticism remains, by and large, the hobby of versatile poets, journalists, historians and literary critics; in other words, of people whose training and practise is primarily to do with another thing.”<sup>257</sup> *Ascent* was produced as a vehicle to cultivate professional art writing in New Zealand, which would in turn develop what Brooke and Bensemann called “the New Zealand image”.<sup>258</sup>

Making sure that *Ascent* maintained this intention, Ross Fraser reviewed the first issue in *Landfall* in 1968. He encouraged the editors to do more than “interest” the public with New Zealand artwork, but rather to “extend” them with critical writers who also provide feedback – positive or otherwise – to our artists.<sup>259</sup> *Ascent* No.1 was advancing into a new field of writing. It provided a symposium dedicated to the visual arts,<sup>260</sup> and represented the developing group of professional art writers in the country. Fraser rightly recognised, “[t]here has been what amounts to a long silence about the visual arts in this country. These are still at an early stage of development; much is yet to come.”<sup>261</sup>

With an objective to establish the professional contemporary artist through serious arts criticism, *Ascent* was an elitist academic magazine; Brooke and Bensemann carefully selected

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*Arts and Community* 4, no.11 (December, 1968).

*Arts and Community* 5, no.5 (June, 1969).

*Arts and Community* 5, no.12 (December, 1969).

<sup>255</sup> Waite explained that high quality paper was needed for the reproduction of coloured images in *Ascent*.

Waite, “Adventure and Art,” 111.

<sup>256</sup> Peter Tomory, “Looking at Art in New Zealand,” *Landfall* 12, no. 2 (June, 1958): 165.

<sup>257</sup> Wystan Curnow, “Reviews: ‘The Inland Eye,’ ‘Perspectives,’ ‘The Far Away Hills,’” *Landfall* 17, no.2 (June 1963): 196.

<sup>258</sup> As explained in “Notes”.

“Notes,” *Ascent* 1, no.2 (July, 1968): 83.

<sup>259</sup> Ross Fraser, “Ascent,” *Landfall* 22 no.1 (1968): 106 -107.

<sup>260</sup> At least for the first two issues.

<sup>261</sup> Fraser, “Ascent,” *Landfall* 22 no.1 (1968): 107.

their contributors. The highest quality was expected. Before the first issue was published Bensemann confided in Brasch: “I may be foolish in imagining it’s possible to make the issue visually sound – but at the same time I must restrict it in view of costs involved [...]. God only knows what sort of response I’d get for articles – it makes me tremble [sic].”<sup>262</sup>

The refined minds whose literacy skills filled the columns of *Ascent* included academics, and former or current public gallery directors; the limited selection of art specialists meant that poets and play writers were also used. Writers on the visual arts who featured in the five issues of *Ascent* included: Leo Bensemann, Don and Judith Binney, Charles Brasch, Roy and Juliet Cowan (Juliet Peter), Melvin Day, Gil and Shay Docking, Anthony Green, Patrick Hutchings, E. H. McCormick, Douglas MacDiarmid, Quentin Macfarlane, T. J. McNamara, Bruce Mason, Ron O’Reilly, June Opie, Robyn Ormerod, H. Winston Rhodes, Ian Roberts, Beverley Simmons, John Stacpoole, John Summers, Mark Young, Peter Young, with Peter Tomory – the former Director of the Auckland City Art Gallery – and Gordon Brown – co-author of *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting: 1839 -1967* (1969).<sup>263</sup>

The articles were both critical and informative. *Ascent*’s readers were updated on the national art scene through educational or descriptive articles and interviews. For example, in *Ascent* No.1 there is an article on the pottery of Auckland artist Patricia Perrin by Beverley Simmons, and an interview with Greer Twiss by Gil Docking. Both explain the artist’s medium, and practise, and uncover their history, their qualifications, and their experience. *Ascent* promoted the artist as a professional practitioner.<sup>264</sup>

Additionally, in *Ascent* No.1, the concept and function of art, a visual analysis of an artist’s featured work, and what had been previously written about New Zealand art, were all critically considered. Douglas MacDiarmid’s article, “What is Art supposed to do?”, is a philosophical argument that uses selected anthropological and historical details to explore the source of ‘art’, its function and its meaning. O’Reilly’s review, “Art and the Encyclopaedia”, critiques an early New Zealand encyclopaedia,<sup>265</sup> listing the artists which he considered to be “serious” but omitted from this publication. In addition, Gordon Brown, in “Patrick Hanly’s

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<sup>262</sup> Letter to Charles Brasch from Bensemann, 22 February 1967, cited in Simpson, *Fantastica*, 121.

<sup>263</sup> I have only included authors on the visual arts, not the performing arts.

<sup>264</sup> *Ascent* 1, no.1 (November, 1967): 5-9, 47-53, 57-61.

<sup>265</sup> Alexander Hare McLintock, ed., *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* (Wellington: R.E. Owen, 1966). *Ascent* 1, no.1 (November, 1967).

*Pacific Icons*”, used iconographic analyses to interpret Hanly’s abstract paintings. He noted: “[t]his subject involves the exploration of special qualities associated with our environment: the dominance of undisturbed land forms, the sky, the sea, the intense isolation that can be experienced here coupled with the absence of any prolonged occupation of the land.”<sup>266</sup>

Charles Brasch was an esteemed mentor to Bensemann, who had frequent consultations with him as an overseer.<sup>267</sup> Brasch encouraged the analytical quality of *Ascent*. If he thought this was not attained, the editors were informed. Regarding a review of Olivia Spenser Bower’s exhibition at the CSA in 1968 published in *Ascent* No.3, Brasch wrote to Bensemann: “[t]he article is a bad mistake: completely uncritical [...]. You’ll kill ASCENT if you fill your pages with such pap [sic].”<sup>268</sup> In addition, also published in *Ascent* No.3, Brasch wrote a review that unreservedly critiqued Hamish Keith’s, Mark Young’s, and Tomory’s booklets entitled *New Zealand Art*, published by A.H and A.W Reed in 1968. In particular, Brasch accused Tomory of “muddled thinking, false assumption and bad writing”.<sup>269</sup> Tomory’s reply and Brasch’s reiterated argument were published in *Ascent* No.4 as letters to the Editor.<sup>270</sup> These booklets were soon to become the country’s art history ‘canon’ in 1969 when *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting: 1839 -1967* was published. Brasch was essentially questioning the ACAG’s agenda and insight to define New Zealand art; *Ascent* was the vehicle for this dispute.

Indeed, the artists who featured in *Ascent* received the financial benefits of being included in a publication: they were paid for the reproduction of their work, and they were profiled – which generated a market for their artwork and, in turn, helped establish their practise. Contemporary art was reproduced in full-page-sized colour plates, or smaller black and white

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<sup>266</sup> *Ascent* 1, no.1 (November, 1967): 18.

<sup>267</sup> Peter Simpson explained: “Charles Brasch, [...] would have been a key advisor to Leo, partly because [Bensemann] was the key man at Caxton [...]. So there was a constant to-ing and fro-ing between Brasch and Bensemann”.

Peter Simpson, Interview, 10 June 2013.

<sup>268</sup> Letter to Leo Bensemann from Charles Brasch, 4 June 1969, cited in Simpson, *Fantastica*, 122.

<sup>269</sup> The 3 booklets were written as introductions to New Zealand art.

Charles Brasch, “Publications: New Zealand Art,” *Ascent* 1, no.3 (April, 1969): 86.

<sup>270</sup> Tomory informed *Ascent*’s readership: “the ‘inadequacies’ [...] in the booklets] are largely differences of opinion or emphasis”, and that no one “can lay claim to being an authority on New Zealand art. Not nearly enough work has been done by anyone, including your reviewer [Brasch], to allow him to be so dogmatic on the subject of artists and movements.” Published beneath Tomory’s letter, Brasch’s letter to the Editor reiterated his argument that the booklets were poorly written and insisted that positive reviews regarding them were simply “puff”.

Peter Tomory, “New Zealand Art: to the Editor,” *Ascent* 1, no.4 (November, 1969): 74.

Charles Brasch, “New Zealand Art: to the Editor,” *Ascent* 1, no.4 (November, 1969): 74-75.

images;<sup>271</sup> Brooke and Bensemman respectfully included all details – the artists name, the artwork’s title and the date produced. Reproductions of works by Rita Angus, Barry Cleavin, John Drawbridge, Colin McCahon, Trevor Moffitt, Milan Mrkusich, Michael Smither, and William Sutton are all found in *Ascent* No.1.<sup>272</sup> John Parker, an artist whose artwork featured in *Ascent* No.4, recalled the experience: “[t]here were some [...] drawings that I had done of the West Coast [...]. I was two years out of Art School when that happened [...]. I was very pleased about it at the time because it was an opportunity”.<sup>273</sup>

Brooke and Bensemman treated artists as valued and professional practitioners. Editing an article intended for *Ascent* No.4 and written by Patrick Hutchings – “The Hard Edge Abstractions of Gordon Walters” – Brooke not only sent the article to Hutchings for approval of revisions, but to Walters as well.<sup>274</sup> Likewise, Bensemman asked Walters’ professional opinion when he liaised with him regarding the layout of illustrations.<sup>275</sup> In addition, even though establishing a visual arts magazine was incredibly expensive and money was tight, artists were paid for the use of their work.<sup>276</sup> Parker, for example, wrote to The Caxton Press thanking them for the money he received from his drawings.<sup>277</sup> Brooke and Bensemman anticipated issues of copy right and the intellectual property of artists’ which was to increasingly dominate the agendas of public galleries and their collections from the 1980s as professional infrastructures in the arts grew.

*Ascent* reproduced images of works that reflected a spirit of national identity, it encouraged an international art practise and – specifically in its final issue – it advocated the value of female artists and art professionals as equal practitioners to males. *Ascent* was described as esoteric,<sup>278</sup> but it was driven by the knowledge, preferences and contacts of two people. Brooke and Bensemman were part of the local art community; they mixed with those who

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<sup>271</sup> Waite, “Adventure and Art,” 111.

<sup>272</sup> *Ascent* 1, no.2 (July, 1968).

<sup>273</sup> Parker explained that at this time it was Brasch and Woollaston who came to visit him and Brasch said “I could include these in my next issue of *Ascent*.”

John Parker, Interview, 5 August 2013.

<sup>274</sup> MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to Gordon Walters from Brooke, 4 Aug 1969.

<sup>275</sup> MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to Bensemman from Walters, 4 June 1969.

<sup>276</sup> Writers were also paid for their articles. Brooke wrote to Gil Docking thanking him for his article on Frances Hodgkins and stated that she had enclosed a cheque, which “seems little enough recompense for your effort, but we are still struggling as you know”.

MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0083, Letter to Docking from Brooke, undated.

<sup>277</sup> MB198, BBP, box 6, ref. no. 0161, Letter to The Caxton Press from John Parker, undated.

<sup>278</sup> Parker explained that *Ascent* was: “a pioneering kind of magazine, but it was quite a modest magazine”. Parker, Interview, 5 August 2013.

shared their passionate interest – most of whom also were members of The Group. These were the painters of Brooke and Bensemann’s generation: Hamish Keith and Gordon Brown observed that, “nearly every painter of note working in New Zealand during the 1940s was either a member or had been asked to exhibit in The Group”.<sup>279</sup> Naturally, The Group dominated *Ascent*.

*Ascent* was an early attempt to officially record a functioning national art community: it was a self-proclaimed “medium for a discussion of the arts in this country”.<sup>280</sup> As Tomory later noted in 1969, in New Zealand “everyone interested in the arts knows everyone interested in the arts”,<sup>281</sup> this was a circumstance utilized by Brooke and Bensemann. Macfarlane explained: “They [Brooke and Bensemann] would hear things from people, [from within the...] big art network [...]. If somebody heard something about something, then ‘boom’ they were all on to it”.<sup>282</sup> *Ascent* anticipated the – already mentioned – seminal publication by Brown and Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting: 1839 -1967* (1969). Such publications provided a context for New Zealand artists to measure and anchor their work. Accordingly, *Ascent* proclaimed a recognisable and sustained national art practise so artists no longer practised in a vacuum.

*Ascent*’s audience was also international, one further accomplishment of the magazine’s professional distinction. Patrick Hutchings – who first wrote for the magazine while he was lecturing at the Western Australia University’s philosophy department – submitted two articles, one of which was selected for *Ascent* No.4.<sup>283</sup> Hutchings later became a professor at Edinburgh University and requested copies of *Ascent* No. 4 to disperse amongst his colleagues in Scotland, England and the USA.<sup>284</sup> Hutchings declared: “it is a very handsome issue: Gordon Walters cover is tremendously good [...]. Altogether a fine piece of layout and I am delighted in the way you arranged text and pictures [sic].” He praised Brooke and Bensemann further when he claimed that *Ascent* “will [...] keep my Australian colleagues

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<sup>279</sup> Gordon Brown and Hamish Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1839-1980* (Auckland: David Bateman in association with Collins, 1988) 139.

<sup>280</sup> Fraser, “Ascent,” *Landfall* 22, no.1 (March, 1968): 121.

<sup>281</sup> Peter Tomory, “New Zealand Art,” *Landfall* 23, no.2 (June, 1969): 187.

<sup>282</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>283</sup> MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to Hutchings from Bensemann, 5 September 1968.

<sup>284</sup> MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to the Editors of *Ascent* from Hutchings, 12 October 1969.

humble” and, comparing it to the *Scottish International*, he asserted “I think *Ascent* can give it points”.<sup>285</sup>

Overseas subscriptions pleased the QEII Arts Council, who specifically funded *Ascent* for this purpose.<sup>286</sup> Representing the QEII Arts Council, David Peters wrote: “the future of the arts in New Zealand will depend not only on the vigour of the response within this country but also on sympathetic understanding from overseas”.<sup>287</sup> The QEII Arts Council, as Creative New Zealand still does today, intended to establish national artists by funding a magazine to introduce the “New Zealand image” to an overseas market – ensuring a greater opportunity for an established career through a larger market. By 1970, Brooke and Bensemman had an international audience: there is correspondence requesting copies of *Ascent* from Dr Terence Barrow of Hawaii, Barry’s Art Gallery in Surfers Paradise, Australia, and Peter Anthony from the Fine Arts Library at the University of Manitoba in Canada.<sup>288</sup>

In addition, while the fifth edition of *Ascent* celebrated the centennial of Frances Hodgkins’ birth, it also endorsed the equality of men and women in the arts community:<sup>289</sup> it advocated female professionalism through a declaration of Hodgkins’ deserved place in both British and New Zealand art history. Also a contemporary painter, Shay Docking was one of the female writers chosen for this issue. She explained: “[w]e have by now (in the 1970s) reached the point in history where we totally accept that women have the capacity to use their intelligence, their experience, [and] their gifts, to contribute through their chosen vocation to society. [...] She must write as a woman; she must paint as a woman. Thus her contribution is more authentic and valuable”.<sup>290</sup> Just as Docking was staking women’s requisite place in the

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<sup>285</sup> MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to the Editors of *Ascent* from Hutchings, 12 October 1969 and 17 February 1970.

<sup>286</sup> Brooke and Bensemman explain in “Notes” that “valuable assistance [has been] given by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council towards an overseas distribution of the journal.”

“Notes,” *Ascent* 1, no.2 (July, 1968): 83.

<sup>287</sup> David Peters, “Preforming Arts in New Zealand,” *Ascent* 1, no.3 (April, 1969): 30.

<sup>288</sup> MB198, BBP, box 6, ref. no. 0161, Letter to the Editors of *Ascent* from Terence Barrow, 2 July 1970; Letter to Bensemman from Barry’s Art Gallery, Surfers Paradise, Australia, 19 May 1970; Letter to the Editors of *Ascent* from Peter Anthony, University of Manitoba, Canada, 8 July 1970.

<sup>289</sup> It was not unusual that female authors were published in *Ascent*, in fact, every issue of *Ascent* had at least one female writer – except No.4. Though female writers were grossly out-numbered by males, they were, at least, represented in the magazine in the late 1960s.

<sup>290</sup> The other female author used in this issue was June Opie.

Shay Docking, “Frances Hodgkins and a New Tradition,” *Ascent* Frances Hodgkins Commemorative Issue (December, 1969): 72.

professional world in 1969, as Editor of *Ascent*, Brooke was equally taking her place as a professional female within contemporary arts practise in New Zealand.

### Financial Difficulties

Published in December 1969, the Frances Hodgkins Commemorative Issue was the very last issue of *Ascent*. It was optimistic for The Caxton Press to publish such a magazine considering *Landfall*'s financial viability; *Ascent* also struggled financially.<sup>291</sup> Bensemann wrote to Moffitt that *Ascent* needed to sell 5000 copies of each issue to be viable.<sup>292</sup> This never happened. In August 1969 Brooke wrote to Hutchings: "Ascent 1, 2 and 3 have all lost money".<sup>293</sup> The insufficient subscribers and lack of state funding were not supplemented by the magazines minute amount of advertising: Several Arts, Barry Lett Galleries and New Vision Gallery, were dealer galleries who advertised in *Ascent*, along with local business, such as, Hall Picture Framers, Redferns, Christchurch Photo Engraves and Whitcombe and Tombs Publishers.<sup>294</sup> Serious art publications were a 'labour of love' in the late 1960s as much as they are today.

*Ascent*'s survival would depend on central Governments support. After The Caxton Press' positive reply to the QEII Arts Council's proposition to produce an "arts journal" in 1965,<sup>295</sup> the following year in June, the QEII Arts Council explained that they could not come to a decision and had set aside a sum "earmarked for reserve".<sup>296</sup> This was an unfortunate beginning to a frustrating relationship once the publication began: the QEII Arts Council were continually reluctant in their support. In a letter to Brasch, Bensemann expressed his exasperation: "I wish I could find someone to put a barrel of gunpowder under the QEII and blow the striped pants off their fat bums."<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Waite, "Adventure and Art," 111.

<sup>292</sup> Bensemann, cited in Ibid., 107.

<sup>293</sup> MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to Patrick Hutchings from Brooke, 4 August 1969.

<sup>294</sup> According to Peter Simpson, another cause of *Ascent*'s demise was that it was published in Christchurch and not Auckland – the city known for leading the support of local modernism. Simpson, *Fantastica*, 121.

*Ascent* 1, no.2 (July, 1968).

*Ascent* 1, no.3 (April, 1969).

*Ascent* 1, no.4 (November, 1969).

<sup>295</sup> Waite, "Adventure and Art," 111.

<sup>296</sup> Letter to Brasch from Donovan, 18 July 1966, cited in Ibid.

<sup>297</sup> Letter to Brasch from Bensemann, 16 April 1968, cited in Simpson, *Fantastica*, 121.

Possessing a greater understanding of the necessity of commerce from her time at the CSA, Brooke proactively pursued funding for the continuation of the *Ascent*. In order to help with costs and ensure the journal had coloured images, an innovative idea was formulated. Necessity demanded what Peter Webb – the founder of the *Art New Zealand* – described as an abnormal act for a magazine.<sup>298</sup> Brooke wrote to the Librarian at Victoria University to market the sponsorship of the magazine’s colour images: “[s]ponsorship of a colour block is \$200, which covers the cost of colour separations and the making and printing of the colour blocks. In return, the painting is featured in the arts journal and at the time of printing two hundred extra prints are provided for the sponsors. These extra prints are mounted and [could become a] greeting card.”<sup>299</sup>

When a large retrospective exhibition of Hodgkins’ artwork was to tour New Zealand, and then travel to the Commonwealth Institute Gallery in England in January 1970, Brooke secured funding from the QEII Arts Council for the Frances Hodgkins Commemorative Issue of *Ascent* to accompany the exhibition (published in December 1969).<sup>300</sup> She encouraged the country’s public galleries to be involved in the memorial tribute: Brooke secured sponsorship from the ACAG, the RMAG, The Dunedin Public Art Gallery, and the National Art Gallery, for the many images throughout the issue.<sup>301</sup> Baverstock – then the full-time Director of the RMAG – consented to the colour reproduction of 200 *Pleasure Garden*, 1933, cards; he signed a letter stating the public gallery would sponsor the colour plate.<sup>302</sup>

Additionally, as the correspondence associated with *Ascent* reveals, Brooke was determined in her efforts to secure funding. In desperation, she and Bensemann compromised their

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<sup>298</sup> Peter Webb explained that it was unusual for a visual arts magazine to approach sponsors for its colour plates.

Peter Webb, Email correspondence, 22 October 2013.

<sup>299</sup> See Appendix 2 for further information regarding sponsorship of colour plates.

MB198, BBP, box 6, ref. no. 0160, Letter to J.P. Sage, University Librarian, from Brooke, 25 August 1969.

<sup>300</sup> The exhibition was organised by the QEII Arts Council.

MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to Hutchings from Brooke, 27 November 1967.

“Acknowledgements,” *Ascent* Frances Hodgkins Commemorative Issue (December, 1969): 3.

<sup>301</sup> For further information see Appendix 2.

MB198, BBP, box 6, ref. no. 0160, Letter to Brooke from ACAG, August 1969.

“Acknowledgements,” *Ascent* Frances Hodgkins Commemorative Issue (December, 1969): 3.

<sup>302</sup> Considering Canterbury’s history surrounding the ‘*Pleasure Garden* incident’ – in which Baverstock was a leading antagonist in the initial rejection of the painting for the public gallery’s collection – it was approximately two decades later that he agreed to fund the painting’s reproduction, immediately before his retirement. The colour reproduction of *Pleasure Garden* features in the last issue of *Ascent*.

*Ascent* Frances Hodgkins Commemorative Issue (December, 1969): 40.

MB198, BBP, box 6, ref. no. 0160, Letter to the Editors of *Ascent* from William Baverstock, 24 August 1969.



objective to specialize in the visual arts. *Ascent* had to meet new criteria set by the QEII Arts Council: the inclusion of performance arts, which began appearing in *Ascent* No. 3. Brooke explained to Hutchings in August 1969:

This simply means they [the QEII Arts Council] will provide articles on the performing arts etc., which will take over a portion of the space available. We will continue with the visual arts using a minimum of 50% of the pages [...]. There may be some discontent felt by those interested in the visual arts but the journal will have a wider distribution and at least we retain control of the standards [sic].<sup>303</sup>

Certainly, New Zealand's population and small arts audiences were contributing factors to *Ascent's* financial difficulties.

Though short lived, the length of *Ascent's* existence can be attributed to Brooke, who was committed until the very end. Brooke wrote to Ted Bracey in 1970: "sales are very slow, but I had a talk to the 'powers that be' in Wellington last week and was told to go ahead collecting material with the view of publishing in perhaps July."<sup>304</sup> Brooke did – there was a folder of unpublished material labelled "*Ascent* No.6 1970" in her archived papers.<sup>305</sup> By 1971 matters with the QEII Arts Council had not progressed. Brooke admitted to Hutchings: "I had the verbal promise from the Director of the Arts Council [...], but the long awaited letter confirming the agreement to give financial assistance [...] still has not been received".<sup>306</sup>

Unable to continue publishing both the magazines, The Caxton Press abandoned *Ascent* and the *New Zealand Local Government*. Alborn recalled: "the Queen Elizabeth Arts Council [...] had their feathers clipped on spending; we sold *Local Government* – we had an offer from [...] a big Auckland publisher. [...] It all came to a gritty end – *Ascent* and *New Zealand Local Government* – [...] we pulled the rug on it all about the same time."<sup>307</sup> *Ascent* ceased after five issues, and the *New Zealand Local Government* amalgamated with Auckland's

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<sup>303</sup> MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to Hutchings from Brooke, 28 August 1969.

<sup>304</sup> MB198, BBP, box 6, ref. no. 0161, Letter to Ted Bracey at Hamilton Teachers College from Brooke, 23 March 1970.

<sup>305</sup> However, during the process of writing this thesis, the original folder Brooke labelled was removed and replaced in the archives. Brooke had intended *Ascent* No.6 to come out in April or May 1970.

MB198, BBP, box 6, ref. no. 0161; box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to Hutchings from Brooke, 28 August 1969.

<sup>306</sup> MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0141, Letter to Hutchings from Brooke, 3 February 1971.

<sup>307</sup> Alborn, Interview, 23 April 2013.

*Local Body Review* in April 1972.<sup>308</sup> Although leaving a void, *Ascent* lead the way for future professional and academic New Zealand contemporary art publications, such as *The Bulletin of New Zealand Art History* beginning in 1972 (later to become the *Journal of New Zealand Art History*), and *Art New Zealand*, which was founded in 1976.<sup>309</sup>

### Holly Road

Brooke was described by Coley as being “at the heart of the art circles in Canterbury”.<sup>310</sup> Brooke’s knowledge of contemporary art was fuelled by her lifestyle: she had a lively social life that replenished her professional networks, and her private residence served as a venue and evidence of her sincere support. Brooke’s devotion was pragmatic and personal. This was captured by Coley when he exclaimed: “I can’t remember much of Barbara being anything other than a very important friend of the visual arts”.<sup>311</sup> Though this compliment does have a problematic tone, at the same time, it gestures towards Brooke’s relational approach.<sup>312</sup>

Brooke and her son, Peter, moved to 33 Holly Road in the mid-1960s – a two story house with a flat upstairs and a cottage at the rear of the property, which Brooke rented out.<sup>313</sup> Brooke was dynamic and radical: her young neighbour at the time, Linda Hart, remembered her as a “racy woman with black hair and big black rimmed glasses [who ...] drove the car carelessly, smoked at the same time [...] stood out amongst the conservatives”.<sup>314</sup> In her home, Brooke hosted, what have been described as, “bohemian” parties.<sup>315</sup> Alborn remembered, “she was a wonderful entertainer [...] and] cook”,<sup>316</sup> while Parker recalled that

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<sup>308</sup> The *Local Body Review* was published at Trade Publications in Auckland. Brooke must have kept her job as Editor until The Caxton Press relinquished the *New Zealand Local Government* magazine. “Christchurch Journal Absorbed into Trade Publications Group,” *New Zealand Local Government* 8, no.4, (April, 1972): 123.

<sup>309</sup> Webb, Email correspondence, 22 October 2013.

The University of Otago Te Whare Wananga o Otago. *Publications: The Journal of New Zealand Art History (JONZAH)* [accessed 17 September 2014]. Available <http://www.otago.ac.nz/library/hocken/otago039198.html#bulletin>

<sup>310</sup> Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

<sup>311</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>312</sup> Coley clearly meant to compliment Brooke’s personal devotion, but Brooke was more than just a friend to contemporary New Zealand artists. This comment is further addressed in the conclusion of this thesis.

<sup>313</sup> Brooke and Rendall, Email correspondence, 2 July 2013.

Anna and Stephen Munro, Conversation, 2 October 2014.

<sup>314</sup> Linda Hart, Conversation, 23 February 2013.

<sup>315</sup> Robyn Peers, Conversation, 13 September 2014.

<sup>316</sup> Alborn, Interview, 23 April 2013.

the parties went “from 7 or 8 o’clock at night till 12 or 1am [...] there was quite a bit of drinking done and they were quite voluble”.<sup>317</sup> (See Fig.13.)

Brooke ‘put-her-money-where-her-mouth-was’: her striking New Zealand art collection turned heads, there are accounts of her employing struggling artists to renovate her home, and she rented the top level of her house to art students. Anna Munro, Judith Gifford and Quentin Macfarlane’s youngest daughter, remembered that “there was always somebody doing work on her place”.<sup>318</sup> Rendall also, recalled that her aunt often created jobs to employ labourers who were also artists.<sup>319</sup> Furthermore, Bronwyn Taylor recalled renting the upstairs flat off Brooke with her friends in 1966. Now a lecturer in sculpture at the UCSFA, Taylor was a tenant of Brooke’s when she was an art student. She stated: “I was probably overawed by her lifestyle because she had a lot of really valuable furniture and a really good art collection. She had a lot of Andre [Brooke]’s work, but she had [...] McCahons and Suttons and she had some Doris [Lusks]: it was all there, beautiful”.<sup>320</sup>

It was not only paintings in Brooke’s collection either. There are accounts of her owning New Zealand pottery and rough spun woollen rugs by Kristin Leek.<sup>321</sup> Taylor reminisced: “she was passionately interested in the arts, both as a collector, connoisseur and as someone who had the capacity to put things on the move, and that was quite atypical of its time. So it was part of her life”.<sup>322</sup> Brooke’s home provided more than ample evidence that her commitment to New Zealand art informed all aspects of her life. No doubt this would have impressed artists seeking to live as professionals in a country where the arts were still often undervalued.

Brooke was aware of artists’ needs and knew how to support them. John Parker met Brooke at one of her parties because he socialized with his tutors during his Honours year at the UCSFA. He explained: “she was one of the people who were sympathetic and supportive to young artists in particular”.<sup>323</sup> Brooke’s generosity to artists included offering accommodation. McAnergney explained: “[y]ou could rely on Barbara if the chips were

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<sup>317</sup> Parker, Interview, 5 August 2013.

<sup>318</sup> Anna Munro, Interview, 19 January 2012.

<sup>319</sup> Rendall, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>320</sup> Bronwyn Taylor, Interview, 15 March 2013.

<sup>321</sup> Kristin Leek, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>322</sup> Taylor, Interview, 15 March 2013.

<sup>323</sup> John Parker was the artist whose drawings of the West Coast featured in *Ascent* (see page 52 of this thesis); he attended UCSFA from 1962 -1966. Parker, Interview, 5 August 2013.

down [...]. People went and stayed there [at her house,...] people who had had some misfortune in the artist community.”<sup>324</sup>

Brooke’s practical support of contemporary art placed her in a community of practitioners and devotees to craft. Comparing Brooke to another woman who encouraged him in his early career, Yvonne Rust,<sup>325</sup> Parker explained: there “was a strong, sympathetic and encouraging relationship between Barbara and her [Rust]. [...] They were both about developing the arts.”<sup>326</sup> The women were united by their passion for art; when the Japanese potter Shoji Hamada came to Christchurch in 1965 as part of the Pan Pacific Arts Festival, both Brooke and Rust were part of the welcoming party that waited for him in anticipation at the Christchurch airport.<sup>327</sup> Another such supporter of craft was McAnergney, who recalled that Brooke’s home was frequently the venue for gatherings of Christchurch craftspeople and their supporters.<sup>328</sup>

In fact, McAnergney explained that an artist needed supporters and organisers because they are “the people that look after the details [...]. Artists don’t often worry about those things, but Barbara did.” He used the analogy of a spider to explain that Brooke sat adeptly at the control-centre of a web of interconnection, maximizing networks and surveying the larger picture. He claimed that she was “the mother spider, [...] tweaking things at all sorts of levels, in all sorts of ways, and making all sorts of connections.”<sup>329</sup> Even in her private life Brooke coordinated a structure to support artists. McAnergney explained that “people respected her for what she was. I think there were lots of things that happened in Christchurch that would not have happened quite the way they did if it had not have been for Barbara.”<sup>330</sup> With her ‘finger on the pulse’ of the local art scene – and the national art scene, for that matter – Brooke was in a position of influence.

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<sup>324</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>325</sup> Rust was also known as an inspiration to young artists. Theresa Sjoquist described her as a woman who was at the forefront of the pottery movement in 1950s.

Theresa Sjoquist, *Yvonne Rust: Maverick Spirit* (Auckland: David Ling Publishing Ltd, 2011) 9-10.

<sup>326</sup> Parker, Interview, 5 August 2013.

<sup>327</sup> Sjoquist, 83-99.

<sup>328</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

## Arts Committees and the Arts Conference 1970

Brooke perceived the necessity and value of alliance, and positioned herself at the forefront of the development of professionalism. Brooke's involvement with art councils, and her attendance to the first national arts conference, reiterated her devotion to contemporary art and her comprehension of the affiliation between a supportive council and professionalising the arts. During her demanding position of editing two magazines for The Caxton Press, Brooke was equally determined to be involved in the future direction of the arts.

Taking place on 10 – 12 April 1970 at the Victoria University of Wellington,<sup>331</sup> the 1970 QEII Arts Conference was a progressive move towards a collaborative and professional infrastructure to support New Zealand arts. The QEII Arts Council attempted to bring national unity across the arts and produce a future policy by seeking the views of many with an interactive conference.<sup>332</sup> This was a serious commitment from central Government to develop the arts in New Zealand. Recorded as being “the first such conference on the arts held in New Zealand”, the conference consisted of six scholarly papers, two panel discussions and 178 submitted remits – which were discussed in what were called working groups by the 250 attendants.<sup>333</sup>

The result of the Arts Conference 1970 was a survey of the nation's arts. Hamish Keith also attended and recalled that, while the discussion at the conference was frustrating, communication had at least been attempted and the bureaucracy, the artists and arts administrators knew where they stood in the large and complex picture of New Zealand arts. Keith explained: “the lines of conflict have been clearly drawn for the first time [...and communicated to] the Council that an army existed that was prepared to rise if provoked enough”.<sup>334</sup> Alternatively, this was an event that resulted in a marked improvement in

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<sup>331</sup> Proof that Brooke attended can be found in the saved documents and written notes from the Arts Conference 1970 that are located in her archived papers.

MB198, BBP, box 6, ref. no. 0162, QEII Arts Conference 1970 notes, 10-12 April 1970.

“Arts Conference '70,” *Ascent* 1, no.4 (November, 1969): 56.

<sup>332</sup> W.N. Sheat, “A Personal Impression from the Inside,” *Arts and Community* 6, no.6 (June, 1970): 10.

“Arts Conference '70,” *Ascent* 1, no.4 (November, 1969): 56.

<sup>333</sup> Hamish Keith, “Hamish Keith Arts Conference '70 Report,” *Arts and Community* 6, no.6 (June, 1970): 18-19.

“Individual Opinions Will Be Valuable Aid to Arts Conference 70 Success,” Unidentified article, located in MB198, BBP, box 6, ref. no. 0159.

<sup>334</sup> Keith, “Hamish Keith,” 18-19.

Government funding for the arts; Brooke was *there*, present at the conference for this historical moment.<sup>335</sup>

Additionally, Brooke was on the Print Council of New Zealand, at least during 1969.<sup>336</sup> Illustrating the value of a collaborative committee, the Print Council was formed to encourage the establishment of professional printmakers.<sup>337</sup> The New Zealand painter, Ian Roberts, considered the newly formed council's significance in 1967. He wrote:

In general terms its establishment gives official recognition to the fact that a substantial body of serious printmakers now exists in New Zealand whose work deserves organised support and encouragement, a development which has been recognised outside the country in our participation in two Tokyo Print Biennales and, more recently, in this year's [1967] International Print exhibition in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia [sic].<sup>338</sup>

Brooke anticipated that committees – such as the Print Council of New Zealand – acknowledged the seriousness of artists and provided support and direction for them – even opportunities for international exposure.<sup>339</sup>

Brooke's involvement in local committees did not cease here. She was present at the inaugural meeting of the New Zealand National Arts Federation on 27 September 1969 at the George Hotel in Wellington, and she was later elected to its provisional committee.<sup>340</sup> The majority gathered at the Arts Conference 1970 had expressed that regional committees would provide an increased responsiveness to the needs of the nation's artists;<sup>341</sup> the New Zealand

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<sup>335</sup> Government funding changed dramatically after the first national arts conference – from \$272,000 in 1970-1971 to \$2,179,000 by 1974 - 1975.

Feeney, *The Radical*, 141.

<sup>336</sup> MB198, BBP, box 5, ref. no. 0083, Letter to Brooke from Kees Hos at New Vision Gallery, 4 September 1969.

<sup>337</sup> Anne Kirker, *Prints: A Coming of Age, The Print Council of New Zealand*. The Walter Auburn Memorial Lecture, 26 May 1987 (Auckland: Friends of the Auckland City Art Gallery, 1987).

<sup>338</sup> John Drawbridge and Barry Cleavin were among the artists who featured in the 1967 exhibition in Ljubljana.

Ian Roberts, "The New Zealand Print Council," *Ascent* 1 no. 1 (November 1967): 45.

<sup>339</sup> It is worth noting though, that in her PhD thesis, Gail Ross argues that the Print Council represented only a select number of artists, and that printmaking was recognised to such an extent in the 1960s because of the agenda of the ACAG.

Gail Macdonald Ross, "New Zealand Prints 1900-1950: An Unseen Heritage," (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 2006).

<sup>340</sup> "Report on The Formation of The New Zealand National Arts Federation," *Arts and Community* 5, no.10 (October, 1969): 14-15.

MB198, BBP, box 8, ref. no. 0173, Letter to Brooke from Arthur Hilton, President of the National Arts Federation, 4 September 1969; The Meeting Minutes of the National Arts Federation, 27 September 1969.

<sup>341</sup> As explained in Keith's review of the conference.

National Arts Federation agreed. The President, Arthur Hilton, explained that the New Zealand National Arts Federation aimed to “to achieve the greatest possible co-ordination and co-operation between both individual artists and cultural organisations at all levels, national, regional and local”.<sup>342</sup> At the inaugural meeting of the newly established Canterbury Regional Arts Federation, held at the RMAG, Brooke joined Coley, Trevor Moffitt and Michael Trumic, as four of the 12 members appointed to the elective on 7 June 1970.<sup>343</sup>

By the beginning of the 1970s, Brooke had significant experience and insight into the structures required to successfully develop contemporary New Zealand art. Her extensive level of involvement in the development of a professional art infrastructure set her apart from the majority of her contemporaries. For printmakers, ceramists and artists in general, Brooke was present: she was approachable, on committees, welcoming at social gatherings and coordinating the only contemporary New Zealand visual arts magazine at that time. Brooke’s devotion would continue into the later 1970s, when she was still actively involved in committees: for example, she was on the 1978 Christchurch Arts Festival executive and the QEII Arts Council,<sup>344</sup> she was also invited to chair the Visual Art Committee of the Christchurch Arts Festival in 1980.<sup>345</sup>

### **The Mollett Street Market**

Out of her advocacy for contemporary New Zealand art – and in this instance, particularly craft – Brooke began a business endeavour with three female compatriots in the early 1970s. The Mollett Street Market (MSM) was located upstairs at 601B Colombo Street and was founded by Brooke, Mary Beaven, Lavinia Cruickshank (then Lavinia McAnerny) and Judith Gifford.<sup>346</sup> The MSM was a professional venture of practical support for local crafts people. As the very first craft market in Christchurch, and as it was open after usual retail

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Keith, “Hamish Keith,” 18-19.

<sup>342</sup> MB198, BBP, box 8, ref. no. 0173, Letter to Brooke from Arthur Hilton, President of the National Arts Federation, 22 September 1970.

<sup>343</sup> Brooke may have held the role of Treasurer for the Canterbury Regional Arts Federation, judging from the amount of invoices and receipts saved in her papers.

MB198, BBP, box 8, ref. no. 0171, The Meeting Minutes of the Canterbury Regional Arts Federation, 7 June 1970.

<sup>344</sup> Brooke noted in her diary that she had an Arts Festival Executive meeting.

MB198, BBP, box 10, ref. no. 0186, Diary 1978, Entry on 4 May 1978.

<sup>345</sup> Coley, “Christchurch,” 20, 59.

<sup>346</sup> In fact, the MSM is unmentioned in Roberts’ and Milburn’s *A Concise History of Canterbury*.

hours, the market represented a spirit of socio-political change in Christchurch – which was campaigned for by Brooke. Beaven described the market as “an opening, [in which] Christchurch [began] moving forward”.<sup>347</sup> (See Fig.10.)

The MSM was not only a new concept for Christchurch, it sold craft that the public had never seen before.<sup>348</sup> The market opened in 1971 or 1972,<sup>349</sup> and originally traded on Friday from 11am to 9pm, and Saturday from 11am until 5pm.<sup>350</sup> Customers to the MSM could leisurely peruse what would fluctuate between 14 and 18 stalls attended by craftspeople that included candle makers, leather workers, and potters.<sup>351</sup> The MSM was a dynamic and vibrant space that was always busy. Brooke reported that on average several hundred people would pass through its stalls each weekend.<sup>352</sup> It was an optimum opportunity for the exposure and sale of New Zealand crafts.

A variety of crafts were sold by the stall holders. Beaven, while she interviewed a couple from the West Coast for a stall, was delighted when she realised the gentleman was Bill Hammond. He leaned over and pointed at the delicately designed bone pendant she was wearing, ““I made that””, he said.<sup>353</sup> Alongside Hammond and his wife – who sold wooden toys (See Fig.11.) – there was Peter Dines, the designer of Skin Jeans, and Bridget Brock, who later opened a leather clothing boutique.<sup>354</sup> The MSM also showcased crafted jewellery, retro second-hand clothing, and the screen printed calico and tied dyed clothing of Kristin Leek and Gill Field – who occasionally travelled from Dunedin.<sup>355</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane recalled that in addition to the finger puppets she used to sell for 50 cents apiece, her mother

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<sup>347</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>348</sup> Macfarlane explained: “there were all sorts of people making things that had never been seen before”. Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>349</sup> There is disparity between the accounts of Beaven and Cruickshank regarding when the market formed, but both agree that it was early 1970s.

Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

Lavinia Cruickshank, Interview, 5 July 2013.

<sup>350</sup> “Unique Christchurch Market May Close,” *The Press* (14 July 1973), located in Lavinia Cruickshank Papers (LCP), Grey Lynn, Auckland.

“Mollett Street Market,” pamphlet, located in LCP.

<sup>351</sup> “Stall-holders Leaving,” Unidentified article, located in LCP.

“Unique Christchurch Market May Close,” located in LCP.

Munro, Interview, 19 January 2012.

<sup>352</sup> “Unique Christchurch Market May Close,” located in LCP.

<sup>353</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>354</sup> Munro, Interview, 19 January 2012.

<sup>355</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

Leek, Interview, 14 June 2013.



was often on the last managing shift of the day, which meant that she and her sister, Anna, were on clean up duty.<sup>356</sup> (See Fig.12.)

At a time when New Zealanders could not get enough of craft, the MSM was evidence, again, of Brooke's business nous: she had utilized the thriving New Zealand market for ceramics, and associated crafts, to support local artists. What began in the late 1950s, and continued into the early 1980s, was described by David Craig as the "great New Zealand movement in clay".<sup>357</sup> Both useful and aesthetic, the movement of ceramic home-ware and giftware was so popular that contemporary ceramists like Barry Brickell began to work full-time from as early as 1961, and Yvonne Rust had sell-out ceramic exhibitions at the CSA in the 1970s.<sup>358</sup> These sales from craft practitioners modelled the idea of 'the professional artist' – nurturing an emerging professionalism in the arts. Notably, the MSM was Brooke's first business committed to economically support the New Zealand artist – a business which would become a precursor to her later private dealer gallery.

Brooke, Beaven, Cruickshank and Gifford, entered the venture as acquaintances or friends. Moving in the same art circles, Brooke and Gifford became friends through their husbands' companionship.<sup>359</sup> It was likely the women first met when the newly married Macfarlanes moved to Christchurch from Auckland while Gallery 91 was operating.<sup>360</sup> In addition,

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<sup>356</sup> Munro remembered, that, as a young girl, she was "plonked on a table with the bread to sell [...], as well as sweeping up afterwards."

Munro, Interview, 19 January 2012.

Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>357</sup> This movement was also described as New Zealand's Anglo-Oriental movement: a craft movement influenced by the British Arts and Crafts movement and the Japanese equivalent – which accounts for the renowned Japanese potter, Shoji Hamada's, visit to Christchurch in 1965. The demise of pottery came after the 4<sup>th</sup> Labour Government – who gained power in 1984 – regulated import restrictions.

David Craig and Gregory O'Brien, *His Own Steam: The Work of Barry Brickell* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2013) 18-23.

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Rogernomics* [accessed 12 Jan 2012]. Available <http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/whatson/exhibitions/sliceofheaven/exhibition/SocialWelfare/Pages/Rogernomics.aspx>.

<sup>358</sup> Craig and O'Brien, *His Own Steam*, 18-23.

Feeney, Conversation, 10 October 2014.

<sup>359</sup> Quentin Macfarlane – Gifford's husband – began a friendship with Andre and Barbara Brooke during his student days at the Canterbury College School of Fine Art. (The Canterbury University College became the University of Canterbury in 1957 – when the Canterbury College School of Art received the full status of a university department and changed its name to the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts.)

Art School 125. *125 Years of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury* [accessed 2 May 2012]. Available

[http://www.artschool125.co.nz/SelectiveChronology/1950\\_1960/](http://www.artschool125.co.nz/SelectiveChronology/1950_1960/).

<sup>360</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012.

Gifford, Interview, 9 March 2012.

Beaven explained: “Lavinia and Judy were friends of mine, Barbara I didn’t know so well, [...but] she became a friend.”<sup>361</sup> Inspired by the Berwick Street Market in London (though it did only sell fruit and vegetables) and the Victoria Market in Wellington, Mary Beaven and her husband, Peter, speculated about starting Christchurch’s first craft market.<sup>362</sup>

Though the idea of establishing a market was formulated by the Beavens, it was Brooke and McAnergney who reportedly perceived its value to artists. Contrary to a comment by Macfarlane that undervalues Brooke – that she and the other women had “unwittingly got together a whole lot of artists [who were...] waiting in the wings” – <sup>363</sup> Brooke informed *The Press* of her knowledge of the venture’s significance. She explained: “[t]he market is a great incentive for potters, painters and other people to see if the public is going to like what they make.”<sup>364</sup> In addition, McAnergney reported: “[t]he Mollett Street Market came about because there was concern that there was nowhere for the contemporary craftsman and artist to show their work.”<sup>365</sup> Though the popularity of craft at this time could expose McAnergney’s comment to be incorrect, it was true the MSM was unique because it allowed artists to be present during the sale of their work – they could interact directly with the visiting public.

The MSM become more than a concept when the location was chosen, the stalls erected and the signage created. Beaven remembered that, in Colombo Street, they “found an upstairs part of an old building [...] it was a big open space and it was very cheap”.<sup>366</sup> Next, the erection of numerous stalls; McAnergney took the responsibility of constructing these. He recalled the logistics: “[t]he stall areas had to all be defined and some of them had little structures that were erected; [... the craftspeople] paid a rent and then at the head of the stairs there was the market management’s little stall”.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> This comment is further addressed in the conclusion of this thesis. Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>364</sup> “Unique Christchurch Market May Close,” located in LCP.

<sup>365</sup> McAnergney was one of the original founders of the market, but other commitments meant that his wife at that time, Cruickshank, replaced him in the managerial team. Lavinia Cruickshank, Telephone conversation, 13 May 2013.

McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>366</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>367</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

The market's expenses were kept to a minimum. Since a sign meant the extra cost of a Christchurch City Council consent, the women used a hand painted flag. McAnergney remembered that he was first to arrive in the morning: "I used to go down there at sort of 6 or 7 o'clock in the morning [...]; I had to climb out a window and down onto the veranda and put the flag up and just make sure that everything was right for the stall holders and the management to arrive later on."<sup>368</sup>

The MSM was also socially progressive – it had four females in management and it was open on Saturday. The MSM opened at a time when feminist activism in New Zealand resulted in the Equal Pay Act of 1972 – a progressive step towards recognising women in business.<sup>369</sup> In their solidarity, it was likely that the women's partnership boosted their professional confidence. The MSM provided a change from the traditional role of a mother and wife. Cruickshank explained the novelty: "I found it a really interesting hiatus [...] an interesting way to pass the time. I really loved it [...], it was great, it was fun; I looked forward to it every week."<sup>370</sup>

Though she was an excellent administrator, Brooke was an incredibly busy woman and had a tendency to spread herself thinly. Kirsten Macfarlane explained:

Barbara's life was like a whirlwind [...], she was always running in and running late and then she would be running around [...] she was quite frantic [...] and] she was very very vibrant. She had amazing amazing energy [..., then when it was spent,] she would sort of flop down and be exhausted.<sup>371</sup>

Because of her many commitments, Cruickshank remembered that Brooke was frustratingly late for management meetings.<sup>372</sup> This was certainly outweighed by the positive attributes she brought to the team.

Brooke quickly took a leading role among the coordinators. Cruickshank recalled, "she was a lot older [than me, ...] she knew what she was doing and [...] we looked on her as the boss, [...] as our leader."<sup>373</sup> In addition, Beaven explained: Brooke "was very organised. [...] The

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<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> MacDonald, "Women's Liberation: 1970s," *The Vote the Pill and the Demon Drink: A History of Feminist Writing in New Zealand, 1869-1993* (Wellington: Bridget William Books, 1993) 164.

<sup>370</sup> Cruickshank, Interview, 5 July 2013.

<sup>371</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>372</sup> Cruickshank, Interview, 5 July 2013.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

rest of us] were not particularly serious about it at all, but Barbara [...] she was serious [...]. It was a business and [...]she] was in charge. [...] She] underpinned a lot of things [...] and was] good at getting things done.”<sup>374</sup>

Brooke’s leadership included acting as a public spokesperson for the MSM. Saturday trade was not legalised in New Zealand until 1980,<sup>375</sup> and the Retail Shop Assistants’ Union took the women to court with concerns that their hours of trade could cause an expectation for “staff [...] to work at the week-ends” – as *The Press* noted.<sup>376</sup> Mr B. Alderdice was the secretary of the Retail Shop Assistants’ Union,<sup>377</sup> and Anna Munro recalled that he came and declared to the women: ““you cannot open on Saturdays, it is bad for family life. Family should be at home with their children. You should not be out shopping. It is a day off.””<sup>378</sup> Alderdice became known as “the old Sheriff of Nottingham” to the market’s directors.<sup>379</sup>

In her battle for the market’s operation on Saturday, Brooke represented the other managers in court. Beaven remembered: “Barbara had to go to court twice [...] the conservatism of Christchurch was very strong”.<sup>380</sup> After an application for an exemption to trade on Saturdays, the first court hearing took place on the 15 June 1973 and the Shops and Offices Exemptions Tribunal refused the application – granting the MSM a tourist opening licence instead. This brought frustrating restrictions; such as, only selling to tourists and admitting no general public to the market during its “extended hours” – Friday evening and Saturday.<sup>381</sup> With the stall holders and directors happy to fight for the market on principle,<sup>382</sup> Brooke, Gifford, Beaven and Cruickshank decided to reapply – they applied for the exemption three times.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>375</sup> Weekend trade was legalised through the Shop Trading Hours Amendment Act 1980 – passed by the National Government.

Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand. Weekends [accessed 29 September 2014]. Available <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/weekends/page-4>

<sup>376</sup> “Unique Christchurch Market May Close,” located in LCP.

<sup>377</sup> “Mollett St Market Opposition by Union,” *The Press* (19 July 1973), located in LCP.

<sup>378</sup> Munro, Interview, 19 January 2012.

<sup>379</sup> Lavinia Cruickshank, Conversation, 7 May 2013.

<sup>380</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>381</sup> “Shops and Offices Exemptions Tribunal Hearing: Order of Tribunal,” 15 June 1973, LCP.

“Unique Christchurch Market May Close,” located in LCP.

<sup>382</sup> Letter of support from Robert Clarkson, undated, LCP.

<sup>383</sup> “Summary of Discussion on Mollett Street Market,” undated, located in LCP.

Politics and activism were particular interests of Brooke's. She was described by her niece as someone who was interested in "politics and [...] was keen on making sure that women's voice was heard way back before women's voice was being heard [sic]".<sup>384</sup> Brooke supported the Values Party – which formed in 1972 and was a party that prided itself in leading the way in women's political perspective and women's rights.<sup>385</sup> Brooke even appeared on television to speak on behalf of the Women's Civic Association for a documentary called "Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained: Women in Politics", which featured on Chanel Two of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC) on 23 October 1974.<sup>386</sup> (See Fig.14.)

In the instance of her activism for the MSM, Brooke went to *The Press* and publicised the Shops and Offices Exemptions Tribunal's decision. She explained her dissatisfaction: "[s]ince the tourist licence was granted, someone has to be at the door to ask people if they are tourist. What is a tourist? Someone from out of Christchurch, or someone from Christchurch touring the market?" Also, "we never dreamt that the licence for Saturday trading would be turned down by the tribunal [...]. The Cook Street Market in Auckland had been given one and we saw do difference in the situation in Christchurch [sic]." *The Press* paraphrased Brooke and explained that a tourist licence was not economical for the continuation of the market.<sup>387</sup>

Brooke also secured the support of a local politician and involved the wider public, while the women gained the representation of a good lawyer. Brooke invited those who visited the market to sign a petition for the second court hearing: more than 1000 signatures were collected.<sup>388</sup> A steady flow of letters to the Editor and articles covering the controversy were spread throughout the pages of *The Press*; the women received private letters of support and they strategically wrote to local retailers to gain support; they also had the Labour

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<sup>384</sup> Rendall, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>385</sup> The first issue of the Christchurch Values Party magazine, *Turning Point*, explained the political party's perspective: "[for] too long our politics [in New Zealand] have been determined by the thinking of men – mainly men". Also in *Turning Point*, Cathy Wilson explained that their manifesto included "an embryonic women's rights policy plus policies advocating abortion law reform and divorce law reform". "A Values Perspective," *Turning Point* 1, no.1 (November, 1974): 12.

Cathy Wilson, "Women in the Values Party," *Turning Point* 1, no.3 (February, 1975): 5.

<sup>386</sup> Charlotte McGillen, Archive Assistant at Television New Zealand Collection *Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision*, Email correspondence, 19 September 2014.

<sup>387</sup> "Unique Christchurch Market May Close," located in LCP.

<sup>388</sup> "Petition on Market," *The Press* (16 July 1973); "Unique Christchurch Market May Close," both located in LCP.

Department visit to view the market.<sup>389</sup> Brooke approached the City Council, and with the help of Councillor A.F. Orme, a committee of supporters was established and a series of meetings took place with up to 30 attendees. This committee was labelled the “[w]ays and means of keeping the Mollett St Market open on Saturday [sic]”, by *The Press*.<sup>390</sup> In addition, the managers had the legal advice and representation of Christopher McVeigh,<sup>391</sup> a man described by McAnergney as a litigator who was “good on his feet”.<sup>392</sup>

Brooke and McVeigh advocated for the market’s operation at the second hearing on 15 October 1973. They presented the petition and the letters of support; the Shops and Offices Exemptions Tribunal reconsidered. Records state the “order made on the 15 June 1973 be varied to the following effect: that the shop be permitted to open on a Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00pm [...]. The said exception is granted”.<sup>393</sup> Brooke’s remarkable efforts on behalf of the MSM were captured by Beaven: “Christchurch was a solid ‘no’ until Barbara stood up and argued on our behalf”.<sup>394</sup>

However, this victory cost the women the business. Macfarlane recalled: “they won that case that in effect spelt the end of their venture because they had created an open market for the competition [sic]”. Craft markets in the city quickly became second hand stalls.<sup>395</sup> Beaven remembered this moment as “the beginning of the [popular] second-hand”.<sup>396</sup> In addition, the enforced restrictions during the court cases resulted in the loss of stall holders, who transferred to New Brighton where Saturday trade was legal.<sup>397</sup> Macfarlane remembered that in the end, the loss of sales and the great cost of the court case caused the MSM to close.<sup>398</sup> The MSM market functioned for two or three years, and though there are differing opinions

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<sup>389</sup> “Summary of Discussion on Mollett Street Market,” undated; “Summary of Suggestion Arise From Ad Hoc Committee’s Discussion on The Mollett Street Market,” undated, both from LCP.

<sup>390</sup> “Study into the Future of Market,” Unidentified article; “Attempts to Aid market,” *The Christchurch Star*, both located in LCP.

Letter to Mollett Street Market Managers from A.F Orme, 8 August 1973, LCP.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>393</sup> “Shops and Offices Exemptions Tribunal Hearing: Order of Tribunal,” 15 October 1973, LCP.

<sup>394</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>395</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 6 June 1995, cited in Dyer, n.p.

Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012.

<sup>396</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>397</sup> From the 1960s the New Brighton shopping centre was the only place in Christchurch able to trade on a Saturday.

Christchurch City Libraries. *Heritage*, “New Brighton Mall” [accessed 9 June 2014]. Available <http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/Places/Public/BrightonMall/>

<sup>398</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012.

regarding the year the market ended, most people believe it was before Brooke and Gifford's next business venture in 1975.<sup>399</sup>

Additionally, by the mid-1970s, Brooke's passion for politics was manifest in the fact that she joined the Christchurch Transport Board. During the Local Body Elections of 1974, Brooke was appointed as a Citizens' Association's member to the independent board.<sup>400</sup> She served there from November 1974 until October 1977, monitoring the transport needs of Christchurch.<sup>401</sup> Brooke became the Transport Board's Marketing Representative and Chairperson of the Marketing Committee.<sup>402</sup> During this three year period, Brooke researched and coordinated, or was involved in, projects such as: advertising designs on buses,<sup>403</sup> individual bus time-tables for Christchurch suburbs and a route map,<sup>404</sup> a bus service for the handicapped, cheaper fares for high school students,<sup>405</sup> a free inner-city shoppers bus,<sup>406</sup> and the "City Clipper Bus" – which took residents of retirement homes on tours throughout the city.<sup>407</sup>

In addition, Anna Munro recalled that Brooke encouraged her early experience of activism – for a special school bus from Sumner to Avonside Girls High School in the mid-1970s. Munro recounted that living in Sumner meant there was only one bus that she and her sister could catch to school; this bus would drop them at Worchester Street where they then had to

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<sup>399</sup> It is possible that the MSM concluded as early as the end of 1973 – after the exemption for trade was granted in October.

"Shops and Offices Exemptions Tribunal Hearing: Order of Tribunal," 15 October 1973, LCP.

Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

Quentin Macfarlane, "Memories of the Brooke Gifford Gallery" (Unpublished Memoirs, August 2011) 1.

Cruickshank, Interview, 5 July 2013.

<sup>400</sup> *The Press* reported that the Christchurch Transport Board was unusual compared to the rest of New Zealand: Christchurch's bus services were controlled by what was called an "independent board" – one removed the Government – though there was a City Councillor on the Board.

"Many candidates but few Transport Board issues," *The Press* (1 October 1974): 2.

<sup>401</sup> CH347, Christchurch Transport Board Collection (CTB), Christchurch City Council Archives, item. 268, Christchurch Transport Board Minute Book 1974 – 1977, Meeting Minutes 1 November 1974 and 3 October 1977.

<sup>402</sup> CH347, CTB, item. 268, Christchurch Transport Board Minute Book 1974 – 1977, Meeting Minutes 1 November 1974 and 23 August 1976.

<sup>403</sup> CH347, CTB, item. 268, Christchurch Transport Board Minute Book 1974 – 1977, Meeting Minutes 16 December 1974.

<sup>404</sup> CH347, CTB, item. 268, Christchurch Transport Board Minute Book 1974 – 1977, Meeting Minutes 23 June and 18 August 1975 then 5 September 1977.

<sup>405</sup> CH347, CTB, item. 268, Christchurch Transport Board Minute Book 1974 – 1977, Meeting Minutes 3 October 1977.

<sup>406</sup> CH347, CTB, item. 268, Christchurch Transport Board Minute Book 1974 – 1977, Meeting Minutes 5 May 1975.

<sup>407</sup> CH347, CTB, item. 268, Christchurch Transport Board Minute Book 1974 – 1977, Meeting Minutes 6 and 23 June 1975.

walk – rain, hail, snow, or shine – down Linwood Avenue. Munro recalled discussing it with Brooke, who advised her to “write a petition”. Munro did, and remembered: “the girls on the bus all signed it, and then there was a special bus for us – the ‘Avonside Girls early bus’”.<sup>408</sup> Brooke was always ready to investigate and challenge, and Munro described her as someone who was “full of ideas”.<sup>409</sup>

In her sophisticated understanding of commercial and political realities, Brooke’s achievements during this period highlight her considered and well-focused efforts to establish professionalism in the arts. *Ascent* utilized professional art writers to promote the artist, not only to a New Zealand audience, but also internationally; the magazine cultivated a market and taste for New Zealand artwork. Brooke devoted, not only her professional life, but also, her personal community, her finances, and her hospitality, to support contemporary artists. The committees and conference that Brooke attended were part of a developing alliance between art professionals and artists – an act of collaboration that aimed to provide greater support for the artist. In addition, the MSM promoted the value of contemporary New Zealand craftspeople, and allowed Brooke and Gifford to develop their effective professional partnership within a business that liaised between the artist and the public. The MSM anticipated Brooke’s final contribution to New Zealand art: under Brooke’s guiding hand, the Brooke Gifford Gallery in Christchurch would professionally represent many local and national artists for over 30 years.

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<sup>408</sup> Anna and Stephen Munro, Conversation, 2 October 2014.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid.



## 4

# The Brooke Gifford Gallery

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Brooke founded the Brooke Gifford Gallery with Judith Gifford in 1975. As an established serious arts professional with the accumulated knowledge of her career, Brooke was not in anyone's "shadow" during the management of this dealer gallery.<sup>410</sup> She perceived the significant role a dealership played in the promotion of professionalism in the arts, and then met the need in Christchurch for a private dealer gallery. Brooke utilized her influential position within the art networks and the professional world of New Zealand: she first refurbished and then maintained her dealer gallery by representing leading artists and engaging local, and, even, international clientele. Through the Brooke Gifford Gallery, Brooke modelled the systematic and professional relationship of the dealer and artist, fostered a contemporary market in Christchurch, and cultivated a prestigious reputation; Brooke established and nurtured professional careers. The Brooke Gifford Gallery represented a legacy that Brooke left to Canterbury after her premature death to cancer at the age of 54 in 1980; she spent only five years directing the gallery.

### **Establishing the Brooke Gifford Gallery**

Opening on 26 May 1975 with an exhibition of new paintings and prints by Tom Field,<sup>411</sup> the Brooke Gifford Gallery was the first full-time and specialising contemporary dealership in Christchurch (See Fig.15.). Freshly refurbished, the area at the top of a steep staircase at 112 Manchester Street had two exhibition spaces: a large main gallery and a smaller space known as the print gallery. With large windows that looked out to Manchester Street and flexible spot lighting, the space had ample lighting, but if the artist wished, the windows could be fitted with panels to extinguish light altogether.<sup>412</sup> This was the new dealer gallery in town,

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<sup>410</sup> As previous chapters state, John Simpson had noted that, during the operation of Gallery 91 and her first few years at the CSA, Brooke had been working in the "shadow of Andre." John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>411</sup> See Appendix 3 for a complete list of the Brooke Gifford Gallery's exhibitions during Brooke's directorship. MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0199, Exhibition catalogue, Tom Field.

<sup>412</sup> MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0032, Typed inauguration letter. Tom and Gill Field, Interview, 24 February 2012.

and according to Grant Banbury, “Christchurch [would] never be the same”.<sup>413</sup> The gallery space had been selected by Brooke after many building viewings. Macfarlane – who had been helping her in the search – remembered that the winning factors were the “cheap [rent] and it was big [...], 3,000 square feet, [...] every other place we had looked at was the size of [...] a room.”<sup>414</sup>

It was likely that the cheap rent was due to the particular area of town that the gallery was located in: while others may have decided against developing a business in Christchurch’s red light district,<sup>415</sup> Brooke was determined and pushed ahead to establish the gallery. Looking back, Kirsten Macfarlane explained: “she managed to pull this off, I don’t know how she did. [...] It] was an extraordinary thing to do [...]. I mean she had the courage to walk in there and sign the lease next to, basically, a knock up shop [...], then expect people to come up and then also get people to do stuff for her in that gallery [sic].”<sup>416</sup> Brooke received strong support from the local art community, a fact which implied both an agreement with her cause and a confidence that she would achieve the task.<sup>417</sup>

Brooke founded the gallery through her organisation skills, her business drive, her innovation and her networks. Macfarlane explained that when he originally saw the inside of the building at Manchester Street, and all the work it would need, “my heart sank. But [...] Barbara had such a drive”.<sup>418</sup> Additionally, McAnergney recalled: Brooke “was interested in details and organising, I would go so far as to say that she was always absolutely proficient at it”. He remembered that Brooke was “a lateral thinker, she looked for relationships and connections and she would say ‘now who can I get in touch with to help us with this?’ and then she would say ‘I know’ and she would have no compunction but to get on the phone and get somebody organised”.<sup>419</sup> McAnergney was right, Brooke capitalized on her connections to create a dealer gallery on a tight budget.

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<sup>413</sup> Banbury first visited the Brooke Gifford Gallery as a young man; he would later exhibit there during his Honours year at the UCSFA in 1979.

Grant Banbury, Interview, 9 February 2012 and 28 May 2014.

<sup>414</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>415</sup> Similar to the Peter McLeavey Gallery in Cuba Street in Wellington. Trevelyan, 74-75.

<sup>416</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>417</sup> Although, as Fay Coley reported (an explanation used later in this chapter), it was not everyone’s opinion that Brooke would succeed in operating a dealer gallery.

Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>418</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>419</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

Brooke utilized her place in the local art scene to form a team of people willing to invest in the gallery. During the space's renovation, Rodney Wilson was called upon by Brooke to design the lighting for the galley; a trough lighting system which hid the wiring was installed by Macfarlane –<sup>420</sup> who remembered attaching it to the ceiling with the aid of many helpers; a sign and letter head was designed by Max Hailstone, the Senior Lecturer of Design from the UCSFA, then printed by The Caxton Press.<sup>421</sup> Additionally, Brooke knew the building's owner,<sup>422</sup> and had located the suitable empty space through her friend George Arnerich – who had hired the space below to open his antique store, Eureka Antiques.<sup>423</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane explained: “[w]hen you are patron of the arts, you can call in a lot of favours [...]; she called in favours to get that gallery up and running. [...] I would imagine they [Brooke and Gifford] didn't have a lot of money [...]. No, this was scraping the barrel and getting people to do stuff for her”.<sup>424</sup>

The space had needed extensive remodelling before it resembled a professional gallery; even so, Brooke knew it was the right space.<sup>425</sup> Macfarlane remembered that renovations began in February of 1975.<sup>426</sup> Most of the work of refurbishing the gallery was completed by Brooke, Gifford and Macfarlane – as Gifford's husband at the time, he was remembered as their technical support.<sup>427</sup> Previously, the upstairs space at 112 Manchester Street had been a

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<sup>420</sup> Rodney Wilson was the first Art History lecturer at the University of Canterbury in 1973 and would later become the Director of the RMDAG (1979 -1981).

Rodney Wilson, Interview, 20 February 2012.

Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012.

Macfarlane, “Memories,” 1-2.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., 1-3.

<sup>422</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>423</sup> Macfarlane recalled that Arnerich needed financial support and Brooke lent him the money to begin his business. He also stated: “[t]he first thing they did was [...] stripped out the floor of rotten wood and poured a full concrete pad” – which Macfarlane believed saved the building in the Canterbury earthquakes.

Ibid.

Macfarlane, “Memories,” 1-2.

<sup>424</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>425</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane remembered that one of the reasons Brooke felt sure this was the right time and place to open her dealer gallery was because of her confidence in astronomy.

Ibid.

Macfarlane, “Memories,” 2.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid.

<sup>427</sup> Quentin Macfarlane was described as a practical facilitator for the establishment of the gallery. At the time, he conducted most of the renovations in the evening around his teaching hours at the UCSFA. Additionally, Kirsten Macfarlane recalled that Brooke and Gifford had support from many friends in the local art scene when they established the gallery; Wilson explained: “a number of us, Barry Cleavin [...] Ted Bracey [...] and I pitched in.”

Macfarlane, Email correspondence, 13 April 2012.

Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012 and 11 June 2014.

Rover motorcycle company, Velvin and Cresswell, and before that, Polsons, a paint merchant in the early nineteenth century.<sup>428</sup> Gifford recalled that it was “rough, terribly rough and the place didn’t have a street entrance, you had to come through [...Eureka Antiques] and up.”<sup>429</sup> Macfarlane remembered the mayhem the apartment was found in: old motorcycles lay over the floor leaking oil and years of paint had been splattered in the back room. He recollected attending to what he called the “lion’s share” of restoration work, as, at that time, Gifford and Brooke were both still employed elsewhere.<sup>430</sup>

The gallery was refurbished according to the stereotypical New Zealand attitude of ‘do-it-yourself’; Macfarlane recalled that “everything was done on the cheap”.<sup>431</sup> The motorbikes were disposed of and the sodden carpet was removed revealing beautiful matai floor boards, which Brooke and Macfarlane painstakingly hand-sanded.<sup>432</sup> The walls were refurbished – their old damaged plaster replaced with Pinex covered with a Hessian material found by Brooke, and then painted a warm cream.<sup>433</sup> At the time Gifford worked for Peter Beaven, which meant easy access to architects and builders.<sup>434</sup> The original plans for the gallery were drawn up by one of her colleagues: one room became an office, the largest room in the apartment was kept as the main gallery, and a wall was added to separate it from the paint splattered area.<sup>435</sup> This area became a storage space and an additional room was converted

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Cleavin and Copland, Interview, 30 January 2012.

Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2013.

Wilson, Interview, 20 February 2012.

<sup>428</sup> As illogical as it may seem, there were discarded motorcycles upstairs at 112 Manchester Street. Macfarlane explained that they lay discarded in the main gallery and in the space that became the gallery’s store room. In addition, after the Canterbury earthquakes, a hand painted sign advertising Polsons is now exposed on the side of the building – shown in Justin Paton’s photograph published in the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu *Bulletin*.

Quentin Macfarlane, Email correspondence, 15 April 2012.

Justin Paton, “Perimeter Notes: A Day around the Red Zone,” *Bulletin* 167 (Autumn, 2012): 19.

<sup>429</sup> Judith Gifford, Interview with Dyer, 6 June 1995, cited in Dyer, n.p.

<sup>430</sup> Macfarlane, “Memories,” 2.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid.

<sup>432</sup> Though, at least once, a builder was hired for the interior wall of the gallery.

Ibid.

Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>433</sup> Macfarlane recalled how Brooke had discovered a flame proof Hessian, which was stretched over the Pinex. The panels were then attached to strapping to cover the damaged plaster walls. The gallery was originally painted cream, but Gordon Walters (who had recently moved to Christchurch) would only exhibit with white walls; Quentin remembered that the walls of the gallery were promptly painted white.

Macfarlane, “Memories,” 2-3.

Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012.

<sup>434</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>435</sup> Macfarlane remembered that that the original gallery plan had two rooms, but this layout changed as money was able to be invested.

Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012 and 11 June 2013.

into a print room – that could also operate as a smaller gallery space.<sup>436</sup> As a child, Munro recalled her parents informing her they were going to work at a place called “the gallery”, and that they would return completely exhausted.<sup>437</sup>

Brooke had opened a dealer gallery with Gifford the year the United Nations declared to be the International Woman’s Year.<sup>438</sup> Fittingly, in 1975, the two women were staking their rightful and requisite place in the professional world as female gallery owners. They did this together, regardless of any disbelief they would prosper. Fay Coley exclaimed that “they [people] thought [Brooke] would not succeed [at the gallery] because she was a woman [, but Brooke and Gifford] were there to prove that it would [sic]”.<sup>439</sup> In fact, Brooke was unstoppable. John Simpson reminisced: “[s]he couldn’t have achieved what she achieved without a lot of hard work and a lot of concentration. She couldn’t have done that without an immense amount of thought and personal development”.<sup>440</sup>

In fact, Beaven recalled a memorable visit to Wellington from Brooke which further illustrates her characteristic determination. Beaven explained that on their way to visit the artist Melvin Day, Brooke “fell over and twisted her ankle [...]. Judith and I were just helpless, we didn’t know what to do for the best. But, Barbara was in charge. She wasn’t going to be put off by the fact that she had twisted her ankle. Her ankle was swelling inside the boot, [... she was] in pain, but she was determined to continue”. Beaven added: “she forged forward with what she had decided on.”<sup>441</sup>

In her conviction that a dealer gallery had a prominent role in professionalising the arts, Brooke used her idiosyncratic drive to open the Brooke Gifford Gallery. Coley reported: “Barbara saw the gap in the market increasingly”.<sup>442</sup> Brooke had perceived, what the New Zealand printmaker, Barry Cleavin, called, a “vacuum” in the local support available for contemporary artists.<sup>443</sup> As a consequence of the move of professionalism across the New

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<sup>436</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012.

Macfarlane, “Memories,” 2-3.

<sup>437</sup> Munro, Interview, 19 January 2012.

<sup>438</sup> Cathy Wilson, “Women in the Values Party,” 5.

<sup>439</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>440</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>441</sup> Beaven, Interview, 22 March 2013.

<sup>442</sup> Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

Gifford, Interview with Dyer, 6 June 1995, cited in Dyer, n.p.

<sup>443</sup> Cleavin and Copland, Interview, 30 January 2012.

Zealand arts sector – a shift which Wilson explained reached Christchurch in the 1970s and 1980s –<sup>444</sup> Canterbury was in need of a private contemporary dealer.

The Brooke Gifford Gallery provided a dynamic counterpoint to other art institutions in Christchurch at the time. To local practicing contemporary artists, the RMAG was an old-fashioned institution with a static permanent collection. The public gallery was explained by John Simpson: “it used to be joked, that if you moved a painting in the McDougall [...] on the wall] behind it was bright red [...] – the red that you saw in between the paintings had faded with the light.”<sup>445</sup> In addition, and according to Coley, the CSA was a gallery that “didn’t deal with quality art” –<sup>446</sup> a comment which illustrated the local artists’ desire to distinguish themselves through an organisation with a reputation.

Other functioning private galleries in Christchurch during the 1970s included Fishers Art Gallery, Several Arts, The Little Woodware Shop and Gallery, the Labyrinth Gallery and, for a short time, the Graphics Gallery. These galleries were characterised as: not specializing in contemporary art, having part-time opening hours, lacking regular exhibitions, or specifically established for young artists.<sup>447</sup> Contemporary artists needed a full-time gallery that was committed to supporting contemporary practise to represent them in Christchurch. Brooke was not only devoted enough to attempt to step into this ‘vacuum’, she had the necessary

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<sup>444</sup> Wilson explained that the Christchurch art community’s shift towards professionalism took place later than Wellington or Auckland, and occurred as an inevitable “osmosis”: “though nobody would have been pretentious enough to use that term [‘professionalism’], [...] there is a force afoot. [...] Judith and Barbara, and what they were doing with their gallery in Christchurch, were part of that [...] – setting a higher bench mark for themselves. [...] You] can’t avoid acknowledging that [the Brooke Gifford Gallery] was hugely important in the way things changed.”

Wilson, Interview, 20 February 2012.

<sup>445</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>446</sup> Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

<sup>447</sup> The ‘faults’ considered to be associated with these galleries are as follows. The fine art dealer and framer, Fishers, specialised in traditional landscapes rather than local modernism; the Little Woodware Shop and Gallery sold wooden crafts with a small gallery space that could be hired for solo exhibitions at random. Some contemporary artists were dubious of exhibiting at galleries like Several Arts. Coley explained: “it wasn’t a practically high powered gallery” and these “smaller dealer galleries [the Little Woodware Shop and Several Arts ...] were really shops”. Additionally, the Graphics Gallery – which exhibited works on paper – only opened on Saturdays and Sundays or by appointment on weekdays. While, in 1973 Joan Livingstone founded the Labyrinth Gallery, a small gallery specifically for those emerging from the UCSFA to exhibit and sell their work. Artists represented at the Labyrinth Gallery had to be within the ages of 18-25 years.

Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

Macfarlane, Interview with Dyer, 6 June 1995, cited in Dyer, n.p.

Chris Ronayne, *Trevor Moffitt: A Biography* (Auckland: David Ling, 2006) 66.

Barry Cleavin and Denise Copland, Interview with Dyer, 28 June 1995, cited in Dyer, n.p.

Livingstone, Interview, 12 June 2013.

skills, experience and connections in Christchurch to open a dealer gallery and make it a success.

Essentially, Brooke's venture diminished the need for the artists' collective, The Group; it was a timely signifier that the last Group exhibition happened within two years of the Brooke Gifford Gallery's opening. Leading artists in Christchurch, and New Zealand more broadly, were now professionally represented; many of Brooke's contacts from her long association with The Group joined the gallery's stable. What The Group began with steps towards an artist's distinction, Brooke – through the Brooke Gifford Gallery – continued with solo-shows and professional administration.<sup>448</sup> As Wilson had explained, these were “times of idealism, [...] when] we were all inspired in different ways to lift the game”.<sup>449</sup>

Brooke knowingly provided a coordinated space where artists who were eager to build their reputation could show. Coley recalled: “[i]t was all very well to be part of The Group, but you were just a name amongst others. But if you had a show at the Brooke Gifford – it was your show.”<sup>450</sup> He also explained that “the Brooke Gifford had these connections. [...] The Group and [...] the crowd from the CSA” and “if Bill [Sutton] had a show it was pretty profitable, and if Olivia Spencer Bower had a show it was pretty profitable. [...] Olivia had so many old friends, they would all come flooding into the openings and would snap up everything that she did.” He added that this “sustained the Brooke Gifford”.<sup>451</sup> When the gallery opened, John Simpson recalled: “from then on all these artists, who were so keen to establish themselves [...], would never exhibit at the CSA. They would only exhibit at the Brooke Gifford”.<sup>452</sup>

In fact, central Government also recognised the New Zealand artist's need to be represented by a dealer gallery in the 1970s. The policy of the QEII Arts Council reflected their commitment to professionalising the arts. The QEII Arts Council aimed to increase the status

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<sup>448</sup> The collapse of The Group signified the changes to the arts in New Zealand from the move of professionalism.

<sup>449</sup> Wilson, Interview with Warren Feeney, 26 November 2006, cited in Feeney, *The Radical*, 140.

<sup>450</sup> Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

<sup>451</sup> Fay and John Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>452</sup> Contrary to John Simpson's statement, things were not so straight forward. Both Oliver Spencer Bower and Doris Lusk approved of the sense of community and shared arts practise of the CSA; they chose to remain associated with them.

John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

Feeney, Conversation, 10 October 2014.

of contemporary artists and created a number of schemes to help the artist gain greater access to the New Zealand market.<sup>453</sup> For example, the Exhibition Subsidy Scheme was introduced in 1976 and provided subsidies to help artists cover the cost of exhibitions in dealer galleries.<sup>454</sup>

While Peter McLeavey was unimpressed with this offer of financial support,<sup>455</sup> Brooke embraced it. This decision illustrated Brooke's business acumen and comprehension of the importance of wider networks to help support artists; she understood that professionalism would continue to develop through private enterprise which was complemented by the endorsement of central and local Government. Brooke encouraged artists to make use of this subsidy, because, in its very early days, the Brooke Gifford Gallery needed to charge artists exhibition expenses. Brooke explained to Stephanie Sheehan in a letter that the "subsidy covers 75% of freight, invitations, postage and other exhibition costs."<sup>456</sup> The Exhibition Subsidy Scheme enabled emerging artists to exhibit with dealer galleries, exposing and selling their work to the public.<sup>457</sup>

Brooke knew all too well that artists needed financial support. In the 1970s artists still experienced severe hardship; it was not until the 1980s that a sufficient contemporary market developed in New Zealand.<sup>458</sup> Evidence of this hardship is seen in the letters Brooke received

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<sup>453</sup> The QEII Arts Council, which became Creative New Zealand in 1994, was established by an Act of Parliament to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II's visit to New Zealand in 1963. From 1964 to 1976 the QEII Arts Council's policy focused on the needs of the art producer, intending to increase their status. Then from 1976 to 1988 the Council's policy included the development of the wider art market to receive the artist's work. MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0082, Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council pamphlet, "The QEII Arts Council of New Zealand: The What, Why, Who and How of the Arts Council".

*Creative New Zealand Arts Council* [accessed 17 Jan 2012]. Available from

<http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/en/about-creative-nz/our-council-and-boards/arts-council>.

Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, "Annual Report (1964)," 16; Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, "Annual Report (1979)," n.p, cited in Barr, Bill, and Volkerling, 13-14.

<sup>454</sup> Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, "Annual Report (1979)," 15, cited in *ibid.*, 14.

Keith, *Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council*, 15.

<sup>455</sup> A decision which, Trevelyan believed, stemmed from McLeavey's fierce protection of his independence. Trevelyan, 195.

<sup>456</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0207, Letter to Stephanie Sheehan from Brooke, 1 March 1977.

<sup>457</sup> Brooke first wrote to the QEII Arts Council on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1977 – responding to an advertisement she had seen in *The Press* which described the Exhibition Subsidy Scheme. Eligible dealers were granted a maximum of \$200 to cover expenses; the first record of the Brooke Gifford Gallery's receipt of this subsidy from the QEII Arts Council was on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 1977 for a Murray Grimsdale exhibition.

BGA, Letter to the QEII Arts Council from Brooke, 13 January 1977; Letter to Brooke from the QEII Arts Council, 13 September 1977; "Exhibiting Artists Subsidy Scheme," descriptive document.

<sup>458</sup> Trevelyan explained that in the 1980s New Zealand followed an international trend for buying contemporary art. This period was described by Wilson as the time it became "possible for people to live [from their artwork]". Accordingly, it was not until after Brooke's death the gallery was able to stop charging artists for expenses – such as, postage, invitations and wine. In fact, Macfarlane remembered Brooke's frugality during



from Sheehan and Joanna Hardy who had moved to Maungakarama in Northland where rent was cheap. After their exhibition, “Three Standard Deviations”, in February and March 1976 with William Collison,<sup>459</sup> Brooke held and sold artwork by Sheehan and Hardy as stock and kept in contact with them through continued correspondence. In one letter Sheehan listed the staple foods they were doing without and admitted they were living on “vitamin supplements”. She also sent Brooke a painting to sell which was entitled, *It Is Good to Eat*, c.1976.<sup>460</sup> Brooke’s reply to Sheehan included a cheque: “I feel you are going to have to do something or you will starve [...] I am enclosing a personal cheque to help you out for a week or two – sorry I couldn’t afford more but I am down on my uppers a bit too. Buy some staple foods and I mean food and use some to send some work down [sic].”<sup>461</sup> Brooke was truly devoted to her cause.

### **The Professional Dealer Gallery**

Brooke was determined from the outset to run a professional business with a high standard of service. Building on the model of Gallery 91, Brooke, in essence, trained Gifford in the daily running of the gallery. As the elder woman and a more ambitious and dominant personality,<sup>462</sup> Brooke passed on her knowledge to Gifford. Gifford explained that “she [Brooke] was a lovely person and I really felt that I learnt a lot from her. [...] I sat quite quietly while Barbara showed me how to do it”.<sup>463</sup> In short, it was through Brooke’s

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the gallery’s function in the 1970s: it was her idea to buy the wine in bulk containers – as restaurants did. The wine was measured before and after exhibitions so the exact amount was charged to the artist.

Trevelyan, 303.

Wilson, Interview, 20 February 2012.

Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012.

<sup>459</sup> BGA, the Brooke Gifford Gallery’s Yearly Planners.

<sup>460</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0207, Letter to Brooke from Stephanie Sheehan, 3 March 1977; Letter to Brooke from Stephanie Sheehan, undated.

<sup>461</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0207, Letter to Stephanie Sheehan and Joanna Hardy from Brooke, 15 March 1977.

<sup>462</sup> Brooke is remembered as the “dominant” one in the partnership, while Gifford is described as the “placid” one.

Trustum, Interview, 5 July 2013.

Alborn, Interview, 23 April 2013.

<sup>463</sup> In fact, Gifford remembered being approached by Brooke. She relayed the conversation: “‘Judith, there’s a very nice area upstairs above George Arnerich’s shop in Manchester Street, I think it will make a really good gallery.’ I said ‘oh yes, yes’[...] but she said ‘I can’t really do it on my own. Would you like to join me?’”

Gifford also explained in her interview with Dyer, “I thought ‘well, Barbara knows all about running a gallery, I can pick it up as I go along.’ So that’s what we did”. (Macfarlane recalled that Brooke’s invitation to Gifford took place over the telephone.)

Gifford, Interview, 9 March 2012.

Gifford, Interview with Dyer, 6 June 1995, cited in Dyer, n.p.

Macfarlane, “Memories,” 1.

leadership that the women established the Brooke Gifford Gallery together. Macfarlane stated that “when they started up the gallery they knew exactly what they were doing. [...] There was a long gestation period, then [they] opened with a bang. They opened with a fully professional gallery”.<sup>464</sup>

Brooke and Gifford were organised and Macfarlane recalled that they “systematically set up and they would share [responsibility for the gallery’s operation]”.<sup>465</sup> With the knowledge obtained though working together at the MSM, Kirsten Macfarlane explained that Brooke “obviously had it worked out that Judith and she were going to be good partners [...]; they were a perfect match according to her in terms of partnership”.<sup>466</sup> Brooke was described as a woman of charisma, while Gifford was described as a loyal.<sup>467</sup> Quentin Macfarlane recalled that, together, they were “a well-oiled machine: what one couldn’t do, the other one could do”. He asserted that they were a “formidable” team.<sup>468</sup>

The gallery’s hours were covered by a split shift: Brooke worked from 11:30am to 3pm, and Gifford worked from 1:30pm to 5pm.<sup>469</sup> In the gallery the women had different responsibilities. Gifford’s listed original duties included correspondence, marketing, artists’ records, filing and obtaining newspaper articles; Brooke was responsible for the stock lists, insurance lists, banking and accounts; together, the women were to keep the diary, arrange and hang the exhibitions, keep the gallery clean and sell the artworks.<sup>470</sup> Their meticulous record keeping is reflected in the diaries, accounts, duplicates of correspondence, and receipt books, alongside files of clients, artists, and supporters for the gallery – which have all been preserved as archives.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012.

<sup>465</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>466</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2013.

Kirsten Macfarlane, Conversation, 4 March 2014.

<sup>467</sup> Cleavin and Copland, Interview, 30 January 2012.

Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>468</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012 and 11 June 2013.

<sup>469</sup> The gallery was originally open from 11:30 – 5:30pm daily; Stephen Munro recalled that it was open Tuesday – Friday, and then on a Saturday from 11 – 2pm.

MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0032, Hand written document listing each woman’s responsibilities.

Stephen Munro, Conversation, 8 May 2012.

<sup>470</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane, who boarded with Brooke in 1979, stated: “I remember her taking stuff home from the gallery and [...] sitting there doing the books – she had a table set up in the study”.

Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2014.

<sup>471</sup> At the Macmillan Brown Library at the University of Canterbury.  
MB198, BBP.

Brooke considered professional presentation to be key for the gallery; exhibitions held in the gallery were to be hung by the Directors. Macfarlane recalled that Brooke and Gifford decided that “artists would not put their works up, [...] the gallery would hang the works for them.”<sup>472</sup> Additionally, Brooke advised the artist Leonard Lambert on the preferable number of artworks in an exhibition. She stated that “ten or twelve paintings will be enough for a show if they are major works [sic]”.<sup>473</sup> Field’s inaugural exhibition, an unnamed show of his prints and acrylic paintings, set the bench mark for the gallery’s professionalism. Field recalled: “Quentin was fussing about how works were hung and [whether] the gallery compared well with all the other galleries in New Zealand [sic]”.<sup>474</sup>

As a private gallery Director, Brooke’s provision for the artist included her component in the professional working relationship between the artist and the dealer – a concept which Wilson explained as being “all very new for Christchurch”.<sup>475</sup> In short, the women provided a professional service that supported artists in exhibiting and selling their work. This enabled artists to specialise in their own practise. For example, Richard McWhannell – a young artist from Nelson – recalled how he had “jumped at” Brooke’s offer to exhibit. He recalled: “I thought that it had to be good if somebody was working actively on your behalf. [...] With the CSA, [...] there was no sales pitching going on. [...] The CSA staff] would make sales if somebody was interested, but the clientele wasn’t [...] being sought in a way that a dealer gallery would.” McWhannell described how he handed the responsibility of his solo show over to Brooke and Gifford: “I got the work there, we hung the exhibition together, catalogue was decided on, prices and titles, and all that stuff was done. Then I walked away and went back to Nelson.”<sup>476</sup>

Brooke’s professional practise included communication and advertising. An informative inaugural letter was sent to potential artists discussing the new gallery’s intentions and function;<sup>477</sup> Brooke and Gifford were also lucid to potential artists about exhibition

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<sup>472</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012.

<sup>473</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0194, Letter to Leonard Lambert from Brooke, 29 June 1976.

<sup>474</sup> Tom Field, Interview with Feeney, 1 December 2006, cited in Feeney, *The Radical*, 140.

<sup>475</sup> Wilson, Interview, 20 February 2012.

<sup>476</sup> McWhannell first exhibited with the gallery in 1977, and it is possible that by then the Brooke Gifford Gallery’s hanging policy may have relaxed to include input from the artists themselves.

Richard McWhannell, Interview, 11 July 2013.

<sup>477</sup> This letter (which holds the date of 1 May 1975 – the day the gallery originally intended to open) also informed potential artists of intended commission on sales, gave the gallery’s measurements, and described the walls and the hanging track.

expenses.<sup>478</sup> At first the catalogues and gallery invites – which were occasionally one-and-the-same –<sup>479</sup> were generically formatted with text and the gallery’s logo. But from 1976, artists were given permission to design their own catalogue cover and invite – an example of this is seen in John Papas’ exhibition catalogue of July 1976 (See Fig.17.).<sup>480</sup> Furthermore, the gallery held biographical notes on represented artists alongside images of additional works to ensure ample information could be utilized for selling.<sup>481</sup> Additionally, the women’s professional service continued with quick payments to artists: Macfarlane recalled that “the first thing they set up was ‘we were going to pay our artists first’, and they always did”.<sup>482</sup> Sheehan was also represented by Barry Lett Galleries in Auckland, and she explained in a letter that when it came to communicating about artworks sold, it was Brooke who would inform her directly.<sup>483</sup>

The women also marketed exhibitions – a simple activity in the 1970s. Cleavin explained that the women only had to ask “‘could you send along a photographer and a writer’, and because the person would know Judith [or Brooke], they would send along a photographer and a writer.”<sup>484</sup> The women had reporters visit the gallery from the local newspapers and the *Listener*, they even liaised at times with the NZBC (which would later become Television New Zealand).<sup>485</sup> Cleavin reminisced that Brooke and Gifford “were of their time.”<sup>486</sup>

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MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0032, Typed inauguration letter.

<sup>478</sup> For example, in a letter to Gary Griffiths in May 1976, Brooke and Gifford explain that “[e]xpenses incurred by the artists in holding a one-man show involve those of invitations, envelopes, postage, wine and a nominal charge for electricity”. They also state that all work was insured in the gallery and that the commission taken from sold artwork was “33 1/3 %”.

MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0206, Letter to Gary Griffiths from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 11 May 1976.

<sup>479</sup> In regards to invitations, Brooke informed John Papas in 1976 that the gallery posted 300 exhibition invites to its own mailing list and up to 200 extra to the artist’s private list of contacts for each exhibition.

MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0200, Letter to John Papas from Brooke, 4 March 1976.

<sup>480</sup> The reason Brooke gave for this decision – recorded in a letter to John Papas – was to give the public a chance to become familiar with the gallery.

Ibid.

<sup>481</sup> MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0032, Typed inauguration letter.

<sup>482</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 30 March 2012.

<sup>483</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0207, Letter to Brooke from Sheehan, “Easter Weekend” – undated.

<sup>484</sup> Cleavin and Copland, Interview, 30 January 2013.

<sup>485</sup> MB198, BBP, box 10, ref. no. 0183, Brooke Gifford Gallery Diary 1979, Entry on 30 April 1979; Brooke Gifford Gallery Diary 1979, Entry on 23 November 1979; Brooke Gifford Gallery Diary 1977, Entry on 1 August 1977.

Charlotte McGillen, Archive Assistant at Television New Zealand Collection *Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision*, Email correspondence, 30 October 2014.

<sup>486</sup> Cleavin and Copland, Interview, 30 January 2013.

Additionally, Brooke and Gifford fostered a market for contemporary practise through the gallery's operation. Wilson explained that "it wasn't much of a market, but it was theirs simply by the fact that nobody else was even attempting to fill it".<sup>487</sup> In a letter to Tony Lane in September 1976, Brooke stated "you probably know it is difficult to break through in a new city, and I think especially in Christchurch".<sup>488</sup> Wilson reported that Brooke's efforts to start the gallery resulted in a change of public perception, so that artists were "considered in a different way than they had been before. There was the beginnings of a market for their work where it hadn't existed before, [... making it] possible for [artists] to live".<sup>489</sup>

Progression in the contemporary art market of New Zealand took place slowly; by the 1970s the public's attitude was improving. Both Coley and Jill Trevelyan agree that a generation was emerging who had a greater appreciation for art.<sup>490</sup> The compulsory art education enforced from the 1940s had not only produced New Zealand artists, but an informed and passionate audience.<sup>491</sup> Coley recalled: "it became apparent in the 50's [... that there was a] rising generation of people who had a more sophisticated understanding and interest in art, and were more demanding as viewers." "They were the contemporaries of my generation" and "they were the market for the Brooke Gifford Gallery", he explained.<sup>492</sup>

The gallery encouraged an audience for contemporary art though the provision of a lively social venue that offered fresh and fast paced exhibitions. Remembered by Gill and Tom Field as novel and exciting social events,<sup>493</sup> the Brooke Gifford Gallery openings usually took place on a Monday evening at 5:30pm. According to Cleavin, the gallery's openings provided "a place where people could [...] drink sherry, [...] and where] everyone preened themselves

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<sup>487</sup> Wilson, Interview, 20 February 2012.

<sup>488</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0195, Letter to Tony Lane from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 22 September 1976.

<sup>489</sup> Wilson, Interview, 20 February 2012.

<sup>490</sup> Trevelyan explained that by the 1970s a new generation of well-educated New Zealanders discovered the art of their country.

Trevelyan, 131.

Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

<sup>491</sup> The Thomas report was an attempt by the Labour Government to reform education by introducing a core curriculum across secondary schools in New Zealand. As a compulsory subject, many people were introduced to art that would not have been otherwise.

Clive Whitehead, "The Thomas Report: A Study in Educational Reform," *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* vol. 9 (1974): 52-57.

<sup>492</sup> Coley explained: "suddenly you have got this big flush of talent coming through, [...] not necessarily great gifted practitioners, but highly motivated to have a life in the arts."

Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

<sup>493</sup> Tom and Gill Field, Interview, 24 February 2012.

around everybody else. [... The openings allowed a] sense of place and belonging to something.”<sup>494</sup> With each exhibition building upon the previous one, the gallery generated public interest.<sup>495</sup> Coley recalled: “they are always interesting shows at the Brooke Gifford. You don’t find a dull one.”<sup>496</sup>

Brooke also made contemporary art available to the public by holding artwork in stock. Brooke and Gifford informed potential artists that the new gallery would not only show temporary solo or group exhibitions, but that artwork from represented artists would be held at the gallery.<sup>497</sup> This was further explained to Gary Griffiths in 1976: “[w]orks from the stock collection are exhibited when our smaller gallery is no required for a large exhibition, they are however well displayed for public view in the large wire racks we have in our stock room [sic]”.<sup>498</sup> This ensured that professional artists did not miss the opportunity for ongoing sales.

Brooke’s efforts to promote contemporary New Zealand art were not a tactic to educate the public – as Andre had announced for Gallery 91, as *Ascent* had also sought to do, or as those involved at the time would have believed – rather, her purpose was commercial in the best possible sense. Wilson pragmatically recalled: “we all believed that what we were doing was of value. Perhaps, because I am old now, [...] I am much more cynical about what takes place [...]; I think that it is altogether more commercial”.<sup>499</sup> Brooke’s objective was to have the gallery function as a business; she aimed to enable her own, Gifford’s, and the artist’s survival. In fact, Sheehan compared the gallery to a seafaring vessel *en route* to a new world of success and opportunity: “my regards to Judy, the good ship ‘Brooke Gifford’ and all those who sail in her.”<sup>500</sup> What Brooke understood to be the dealer gallery’s significant and serious role, has recently been acknowledged to a greater extent in the history of New Zealand’s art

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<sup>494</sup> Cleavin and Copland, Interview, 30 January 2012.

<sup>495</sup> Coley explained that the Brooke Gifford was the only gallery in the South Island to hold exhibitions fortnightly. The exhibitions predominantly remained this frequent throughout Brooke’s time in the gallery. John Coley, “The Story of a Dealer Gallery,” *The Press* (24 May 2000).  
Wilson, Interview, 20 February 2012.

BGA, the Brooke Gifford Gallery’s Yearly Planners.

<sup>496</sup> Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

<sup>497</sup> MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0032, Typed inauguration letter.

<sup>498</sup> MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0206, Letter to Gary Griffiths from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 11 May 1976.

<sup>499</sup> Wilson, Interview, 20 February 2012.

<sup>500</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0207, Letter to Brooke from Sheehan, “Easter Weekend” – undated.

through Jill Trevelyan's *Peter McLeavey: The Life and Times of a New Zealand Art Dealer* (2013).

Brooke was an effective saleswoman: she was passionate and knowledgeable about contemporary art, she had the connections, her kindness quickly won people's trust, and she had innovative sales strategies. McAnergney explained: "[s]he had a presence and she spoke from a knowledge base [...]. I think that people recognised in her that she was somebody who helped artists find a home for their work, [and someone who could] get the hoi polloi interested in art [sic]."<sup>501</sup> Leek recalled an instance where a "man brought a huge painting, worth a lot of money" and wanted it delivered at once. Leek remembered how she and Brooke packed it into Brooke's car and drove to Scarborough: "it was quite a thing [...] to carry this huge work [...]. We struggled with getting it to his house and he was delighted. We had to go and sit on his veranda and drink several gins and tonics to celebrate. [...] She was really so good to any clients".<sup>502</sup>

Brooke was trusted by both clients and the artists she represented. Coley recalled that she had an affinity with both:

If a fine painting was made, she could help find it a congenial and appreciative home; if a visitor was confused by the more esoteric forms of art she could explain and make clear; if there was a painter eager to present a lengthy exposition of his life and work, she would be a patient and sympathetic listener and often a source of sound advice.<sup>503</sup>

He also described both Brooke and Gifford as "honest and trust worthy [...], who] had good artists and treated them really well".<sup>504</sup> One client, in particular, who purchased significant amounts of artwork from the gallery during the early years was the academic Alex Baird.<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>502</sup> Leek, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>503</sup> Coley, "Christchurch," 20, 59.

<sup>504</sup> Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

<sup>505</sup> Gifford recalled that Baird purchased for his private collection, but also for the collection belonging to the College House, Canterbury – Baird was described as its "custodian". Tom Weston, in an article for *Art New Zealand*, explained Baird's important role in exposing the young residents of the University hall to contemporary New Zealand art – which he has hung throughout the building to ensure "domestic familiarity". Notably, at the end of this article, Weston acknowledged the Brooke Gifford Gallery Directors for their role in developing the College House's collection.

Gifford, Interview, 6 March 2012.

Tom Weston, "Art for Breakfast," *Art New Zealand* 31 (Winter, 1984): 58-59.

For the potential clientele of the gallery, Brooke not only drew on her contacts from Gallery 91, the CSA and *Ascent*, but also her networks from art associated committees, her work for the *New Zealand Local Government* magazine, and possibly even her involvement in the Christchurch Transport Board. McAnergney explained: “she was very well connected across the local body scene. [...] She knew members of parliament, [...] and] councillors [...]. The people who mattered in the art world knew Barbara and she could be formidable.”<sup>506</sup>

Additionally, Brooke and Gifford’s service to contemporary artists included assistance to exhibit in other centres. In an effort to be known, Coley explained that “artists were trying to show around New Zealand”.<sup>507</sup> Brooke understood the benefits of an increased national presence for the popularity of an artist’s work, and liaised with other dealer galleries on behalf of the artists she represented. She informed the gallery’s early artists that “[d]iscussions are taking place with galleries in other centres regarding sharing of exhibitions on an exchange basis, enabling more work from southern artists to be shown in other centres and vice versa.”<sup>508</sup> In the first five years of the gallery, Brooke and Gifford exchanged artist’s work with Rodney Kirk Smith (in Auckland),<sup>509</sup> Barry Lett (in Auckland),<sup>510</sup> Elva Bett (in Wellington),<sup>511</sup> John Grant (in Hamilton),<sup>512</sup> and Tina Hos (also in Auckland).<sup>513</sup>

Locally, Brooke used a strategy to encourage sales and move contemporary art out of the gallery and into the public realm. She inaugurated a loan stratagem that targeted Christchurch businesses as potential investors in contemporary art. Brooke called it the “art rental scheme”, which she hoped would “get through to some of the business firms and professional people and [...] get the major paintings out on display.”<sup>514</sup> A series of correspondence with New Zealand Cement Holdings reveal that the gallery hired 23 paintings to display in the business’s new building. The women charged 15% of the value of each painting per annum

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<sup>506</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>507</sup> Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

<sup>508</sup> MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0032, Typed inauguration letter.

<sup>509</sup> MB198, BBP, box 10, ref. no. 0185, Diary 1980, Entry on 1 February.

<sup>510</sup> MB198, BBP, box 10, ref. no. 0183, Diary 1979, Entry on 19 & 20 June 1979.

<sup>511</sup> MB198, BBP, box 10, ref. no. 0183, Diary 1979, Entry on 7 December 1979.

<sup>512</sup> MB198, BBP, box 13, ref. no. 0221, Letter to the Brooke Gifford Gallery from John Grant Galleries, 24 July 1979.

<sup>513</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0198, Letter to Tina Hos at New Vision Gallery from Brooke, 27 November 1975.

<sup>514</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0208, Letter to Susan Chaytor from Brooke, 4 February 1976.



for a period of three months hire from 1 December 1977 until the 1 March 1978.<sup>515</sup> This scheme paid dividends, as on 7 April 1978, New Zealand Cement Holdings decided to purchased nine paintings and then a further six in May of that year.<sup>516</sup>

Brooke also thought further afield; in her understanding that an international presence would help secure an artist's success, Brooke – with the assistance of Gifford – sold works overseas. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (previously the Department of External Affairs) changed its policy in the early 1960s to incorporate contemporary New Zealand art, as well as historical, for its overseas offices. Dealer galleries such as the Brooke Gifford Gallery, Peter McLeavey Gallery, and The Ikon Gallery, were invaluable in the promotion of New Zealand contemporary art with their sales to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.<sup>517</sup> In the first five years of the Brooke Gifford Gallery's operation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade purchased the works of artists such as: Anna Caselberg, Patrick Hanly, Ralph Hotere, John Hurrell, and William Sutton.<sup>518</sup>

In addition, other international sales feature in the archives of the gallery. These included paintings and sculptures produced by: Llewellyn Summers and Tanya Ashken sold to Mr and Mrs Unobsky from San Francisco,<sup>519</sup> Marilyn Webb sold to A. Walkinshaw of Canada, Dereck Ball and Michael Smither sold to Mr and Mrs Holt from America, and Rosemary Johnston sold to Mr Meuis-Pelansim also from America.<sup>520</sup> Furthermore, a painting of Tom Field's sold to the New Zealand High Commissioner of Western Samoa in April 1976.<sup>521</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0199, Letter to New Zealand Cement Holdings Limited from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 20 December 1977.

<sup>516</sup> These paintings included the work of: Elizabeth Buchanan, John Coley, Brian Dahlberg, Tom Field, Richard McWhannell, Julia Morison, Michael Smither, Michael Thomas, and Marilyn Webb.

MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0199, Letter to New Zealand Cement Holdings Limited from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 7 April 1978; Letter to New Zealand Cement Holdings Limited from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 22 May 1978.

<sup>517</sup> Trevelyan, 64.

Auckland City Art Gallery, Ikon Gallery Archive on loan from the Don Wood Estate, box 1, folder 9, Correspondence between Don Wood and the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, March 1964 – January 1965.

<sup>518</sup> MB198, BBP, box 9, ref. no. 0178, Brooke Gifford Gallery Exhibition Catalogues and Sales; box 9, ref. no. 0181, Brooke Gifford Gallery Exhibition Catalogues and Sales Books.

<sup>519</sup> MB198, BBP, box 11, ref. no. 0190, Brooke Gifford Gallery Receipt Book, 30 October 1979; box 4, ref. no. 0034, Letter to Mr and Mrs Unobsky from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 19 December 1979.

<sup>520</sup> On 18 March 1977 the Holts purchased Dereck Ball and Michael Smither's works; on 4 May 1977 A. Walkinshaw purchased Marilyn Webb's work; on 5 September 1977 Meuis-Pelansim purchased Rosemary Johnson's work.

MB198, BBP, box 9, ref. no. 0178, Brooke Gifford Gallery Exhibition Catalogues and Sales.

<sup>521</sup> MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0034, Letter to the Brooke Gifford Gallery from the New Zealand High Commissioner Western Samoa, 3 April 1976.

These sales placed the artist outside of the predominantly insular New Zealand market, not only for greater individual exposure, but also to generate international interest in New Zealand art.

Furthermore, as she and Bensemman had applied with the material of *Ascent*, Brooke used judicious selection to build an elite and prestigious reputation for the Brooke Gifford Gallery. Brooke and Gifford worked hard to recruit exhibitions of established New Zealand artists. When the gallery opened, Gifford recalled that “the CSA just dominated the whole scene”.<sup>522</sup> This caused what John Simpson remembered as “a creative tension between the two; there [... were] fierce loyalties.”<sup>523</sup> The women initially struggled to coax some Christchurch artists to become involved with the dealer gallery. Brooke identified this loyalty to the CSA as “Canterbury’s establishment crust”, in a letter to McCahon in November 1975.<sup>524</sup> For some of the early exhibitions, Brooke and Gifford liaised with other dealers in New Zealand – such as Rodney Kirk-Smith, who was written to on 15 May 1975 requesting permission to show artists represented by Barry Lett Galleries in Auckland.<sup>525</sup>

However, much sooner than Brooke anticipated,<sup>526</sup> the gallery was successful in representing esteemed contemporary practitioners. Within the first five years, exhibiting artists included: Gretchen Albrecht, Don Binney, Ted Bracey, Barry Cleavin, John Coley, Neil Dawson, Tony Fomison, Bill Hammond, Patrick Hanly, Ralph Hotere, Colin McCahon, Trevor Moffitt, Olivia Spencer Bower, Terry Stringer, Llewelyn Summers, William Sutton, Greer Twiss, Gordon Walters, and Toss Woollaston.<sup>527</sup> Such a high profile stable continued the respectable

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<sup>522</sup> Gifford, Interview, 9 March 2012.

<sup>523</sup> Nola Barron, who became Director of the CSA in 1976, also remembered: “a lot of young artists who had exhibited at the CSA went on to her [Brooke’s] books. At the time, there was fairly fierce sort of competition about who’s stable you were in.”

Barron, Interview, 20 March 2013.

John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>524</sup> MB198, BBP, box 3, ref. no. 0025, Letter to Colin McCahon from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 26 November 1975.

Gifford, Interview, 9 March 2012.

<sup>525</sup> BGA, Letter to Rodney Kirk-Smith at the Barry Lett Gallery from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 15 May 1975.

<sup>526</sup> MB198, BBP, box 3, ref. no. 0025, Letter to Colin McCahon from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 26 November 1975.

<sup>527</sup> The Brooke Gifford Gallery’s early exhibitions also included: Leo Bensemman, Nigel Brown, Rosemary Campbell, John Cousins, Bill Culbert, Bing Dawe, Gennie de Lange, Rudolf Gopas, Rosemary Johnson, Quentin Macfarlane, Alan Pearson, Don Peebles, Michael Reed, Peter Siddell, Grahame Sydney, Stanley Palmer, John Weeks, and Pamela Wolfe. (This list excludes the artists discussed in the rest of the chapter.) MB198, BBP, box 12, Folders of correspondence of the Brooke Gifford Gallery; box 3; box 9, ref. no. 0179; box 9, ref. no. 0180; box 9, ref. no. 0181; box 9, ref. no. 0182, all are the Brooke Gifford Exhibition Catalogues Sales Books.

legacy begun by Gallery 91 and generated the reputation that Brooke sought. Coley explained that the Brooke Gifford Gallery has “been a rock solid exhibition space for quality artists – quality art. [...] It has got a good name. It’s got credibility and that is the best thing you can have in the art game. [...] If somebody is showing there for the first time you will probably take a second look at that artist”.<sup>528</sup>

Brooke also added to the gallery’s reputation with a non-commercial exhibition by the internationally known New Zealand conceptual artist, Billy Apple. The 1970s was the decade when post-object art, installation and performance arts were embraced.<sup>529</sup> Apple toured New Zealand in 1975 with his austere conceptual art: novel to the New Zealand art scene, Apple’s approach was to remove the items that he felt detracted from the ideal gallery space – he stripped exhibition spaces, and documented what he removed. Apple later returned to New Zealand to execute a nine venue project. He came to Christchurch in 1979 and showed at the Brooke Gifford Gallery from 26 November – 7 December.<sup>530</sup> In “The given is an art political statement,” Apple renovated the print gallery in three days – with the assistance of John Hurrell, Paul Johns, Nicholas Register and Shaun Rouse. He removed the grass matting from the floor and polyurethaned the exposed wooden flooring, he also repaired broken floorboards, replaced lights and painted the walls and door.<sup>531</sup> Then, and in a sense, certifying the changes to the gallery, Apple was given permission by Brooke and Gifford to curate the first exhibition in the space he had reconditioned: a show by John Hurrell and Paul Jones which took place from 10 – 20 December 1979.<sup>532</sup>

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BGA, the Brooke Gifford Gallery’s Yearly Planners.

<sup>528</sup> Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

<sup>529</sup> Trevelyan, 187.

<sup>530</sup> Apple’s invite to the exhibition lists the dates of the exhibition as 1 – 19 November 1979, but this does not coincide with Brooke and Gifford’s diary entries or the dates documented in *Art New Zealand*.

MB198, BBP, box 10, ref. no. 0183, Diary 1979, Entries on the 21, 23 and 26 November 1979.

Wystan Curnow, “Billy Apple: The Given as an Art-Political Statement,” *Art New Zealand* 15 (Autumn, 1980): 29.

<sup>531</sup> MB198, BBP, box 10, ref. no. 0183, Diary 1979, Entries on the 21, 23 and 26 November 1979.

Curnow, “Billy Apple,” 29.

John Coley and Quentin Macfarlane, Conversation, 28 February 2014.

Feeney, *The Radical*, 132-133.

<sup>532</sup> BGA, the Brooke Gifford Gallery’s Yearly Planners.

Curnow, “Billy Apple,” 29.

## Training and Seeking Artists

Brooke would boost careers with a dealer gallery known for, what Coley described as, having “the best artists, the most original, and the most compelling art”.<sup>533</sup> When the Brooke Gifford Gallery was established, Wilson advised at least two artists to attempt to join the gallery’s stable for that reason.<sup>534</sup> In addition, Grant Banbury was an exhibitions officer at the CSA when he chose to exhibit at the Brooke Gifford Gallery. He recalled: “in 1979 [, during my final year at UCSFA,] I went and saw Barbara and Judith and they agreed to exhibit my honours submission”.<sup>535</sup> Banbury explained that he “realised the pluses of a dealer gallery over an art society”.<sup>536</sup>

Indeed, from the formation of the gallery, Brooke’s service to contemporary artists included her encouragement into professional practise. For example, Brooke sent an inaugural letter to potential artists explaining in detail the intended procedures for the operation of the gallery. This document acts as evidence that Brooke was, in fact, instructing artists: the letter asks for biographical information, for photos of artworks, and for artists to be organised and book the gallery for present and future use.<sup>537</sup> In short, the letter invites artists into their role and responsibility as professional practitioners.

The idea that the gallery – that Brooke, in particular – *trained* contemporary artists, is, in a way, reiterated by Brooke’s longstanding connection with the UCSFA.<sup>538</sup> Brooke and Gifford provided opportunities for promising emerging artists to show in the gallery. One example, took place at the end of September 1976, with an exhibition called “New Work: Graduates of University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts” by four graduates – Elizabeth Buchanan, Errol Shaw, Pauline Trengrove, and Jacqueline Dunlop. Arguably, this exhibition resulted in a place for the young artists in the gallery’s stable: Jacqueline Dunlop and Errol Shaw had a later joint exhibition on 30 January – 10 February 1978, Pauline Trengrove had a solo

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<sup>533</sup> Coley, Interview, 29 November 2011.

<sup>534</sup> The artists were Leonard Lambert and Gary Griffiths.

MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0194, Letter to the Brooke Gifford from Leonard Lambert, 5 March 1976; box 12, ref. no. 0206, Letter to the Brooke Gifford from Gary Griffiths, 8 April 1976.

<sup>535</sup> Banbury, Interview, 28 May 2014.

<sup>536</sup> Banbury began working at the CSA in 1977 or 1978; he was employed there three days a week for ten years. Banbury, Interview, 9 February 2012 and 28 May 2014.

<sup>537</sup> MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0032, Typed inauguration letter.

<sup>538</sup> Brooke’s association with the staff at the UCSFA would have been through the arts community, and particularly, through the CSA’s council – which had members such as John Simpson.

exhibition in July of the same year, and Elizabeth Buchanan showed again at the end of September 1979.<sup>539</sup>

Furthermore, and restating the benefit to young artists associated with the established members of the gallery's stable, Julia Morison – who had not yet finished her studies at the UCSFA – was invited to show alongside Bracey, Macfarlane and Hotere in the exhibition “Drawings and Small Works”.<sup>540</sup> This exhibition took place within months of the gallery's opening, in August 1975 (See Fig.16.). Morison recalled that it was the relationship with her tutors that brought the invitation to exhibit at the gallery. She described her first exhibition in the Brooke Gifford Gallery as “unusual”, “terrifying” and “amazing”.<sup>541</sup> Morison then had a solo exhibition in the gallery the following year, 18 – 29 October, and another in May 1979.<sup>542</sup>

In addition to her first experience of exhibiting in a dealer gallery, Morison received additional support from the gallery, and particularly, “a lot of support from Barbara”. Brooke offered Morison a studio within the gallery. Morison recalled that she paid little, if any rent, for the hire of the studio, and that the arrangement would have come about through her mentioning she was “looking for a studio” and Brooke replying “well that's empty, you can have that”.<sup>543</sup>

Certainly, Brooke took her role as a professional dealer seriously; she proactively sought young and cutting edge artists to maintain the gallery. Livingstone explained: “because [Brooke] had a good instinct, she was very good with her artists and she could look forward into the future and see whether they were going to be successful”.<sup>544</sup> Additionally, Coley described Brooke as “one of the best informed observers of the visual arts in the country”.<sup>545</sup> Brooke's taste and insight into current arts practise had its origins in the accumulated

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<sup>539</sup> Buchanan also exhibited in a group show earlier that year, in March.

BGA, the Brooke Gifford Gallery's Yearly Planners.

<sup>540</sup> MB198, BBP, box 3, ref. no. 0028, Exhibition catalogue, “Drawings and Small Works”, 4-15 August 1975.

<sup>541</sup> Julia Morison, Interview, 15 February, 2012.

<sup>542</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, Folders of correspondence of the Brooke Gifford Gallery; box 3; box 9, ref. no. 0179; box 9, ref. no. 0180; box 9, ref. no. 0181; box 9, ref. no. 0182, all are the Brooke Gifford Exhibition Catalogues Sales Books.

BGA, the Brooke Gifford Gallery's Yearly Planners.

<sup>543</sup> Morison, Interview, 15 February, 2012.

<sup>544</sup> Livingstone, Interview, 12 June 2013.

<sup>545</sup> Coley, “Christchurch,” 20, 59.

knowledge of her career: for example, her management of Gallery 91, the CSA and artists associated with both institutions, her travels throughout New Zealand gathering material of *Ascent*, while also her long involvement in the New Zealand arts community – which included her connections with the UCSFA.

Brooke was passionate about artistic innovation, and her search for contemporary art led her to the doors of Philip Trusttum, Richard McWhannell and Allie Eagle. Eagle – a leading feminist activist of the 1970s, and at the time, an abstract expressionist – recalled: “[Brooke] was ready to look for something fresh and what were the new threads. That’s why she [...] came to] me because at that stage my work was highly new. [...] I think that she had a sensitivity about her”.<sup>546</sup> Eagle recalled that Brooke made the effort to travel to where she lived – Bethells Beach in Auckland – to view her artwork in 1979.<sup>547</sup>

McWhannell had an exhibition at the Brooke Gifford Gallery in 1977 because “they were the only people that asked”. He was first spotted by Brooke at his 1974 exhibition at the CSA. “She asked me whether I would like to exhibit in a dealer gallery”, he recalled. “I was impressed. [...] I was really, really excited. One little exhibition [at the CSA and] I was being headhunted. It didn’t ever really happen again”.<sup>548</sup> McWhannell’s solo exhibition of figurative and landscape paintings began at the end of June.<sup>549</sup>

In fact, Brooke stood out to the artists as a woman who truly cared about their success, was confident in her intuition, and willing to take risks. Contemplating Brooke’s support, both

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<sup>546</sup> Eagle, also known as Alison Mitchell, worked as Exhibitions Officer at the RMDAG during the 1970s. In 1975 she curated “Six Women Artists” which was prompted by an earlier exhibition at the RMDAG – the all-male “Six New Zealand Artists.” She also curated a retrospective exhibition of Olivia Spencer Bower’s paintings in November 1977; Eagle liaised with Brooke for this, whom she found to be “a real fund of knowledge [...] as Brooke] knew quite a bit about The Group”.

Allie Eagle, Interview, 8 July 2013.

Roberts and Milburn, 85-86.

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu. Exhibition catalogue, “Retrospective: Olivia Spencer Bower,” 22 November 1977 – 22 January 1978 [accessed 10 October 2014]. Available <http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/multimedia/print/digitized-gallery-publications/olivia-spencer-bower-retrospective/>

<sup>547</sup> On this visit, Brooke encouraged Eagle to decide upon and develop a body of work, and though Brooke asked Eagle each time she came to Christchurch, “are you still thinking of your show with me?” Eagle never did. But, she always felt that Brooke was encouraging her to approach the gallery whenever she was ready. “If she had lived I might have had that show with her,” Eagle explained.

Eagle, Interview, 8 July 2013.

<sup>548</sup> McWhannell, Interview, 11 July 2013.

<sup>549</sup> MB198, BBP, box 3, ref. no. 0023, Exhibition invite, “Richard McWhannell: Recent Paintings,” 27 June - 8 July 1977.

Eagle and McWhannell came to similar conclusions. Eagle recalled: “[s]he was warm and sympathetic [...], it was like she was alongside me. [...] I think she genuinely would have found me people who loved my work”.<sup>550</sup> Furthermore, McWhannell explained that she had a “genuine kind of interest [...], she [...] was] a very warm person, but she was also a woman who had her own mind”.<sup>551</sup>

Brooke had been attempting to exhibit Trusttum since 1975; she considered him to be a “prolific painter”.<sup>552</sup> However, it was 1978 that Trusttum’s first exhibition at the Brooke Gifford Gallery took place. He remembered: Brooke “phoned up [...] and said could she come round and see what I was doing.” One viewing and it was settled. Brooke said “I will give you a show in two weeks’ time”.<sup>553</sup> Trusttum recalled that at the time he was working in a pressed paint technique and producing works on canvass which resembled sketched building plans amongst compositions of colour.<sup>554</sup> His exhibition ran from 30 May – 9 June 1978,<sup>555</sup> and he explained that Brooke “bumped” another show to exhibit him.<sup>556</sup> Trusttum noted that “she sort of got it hot from the oven [...]. She liked the work [..., and] she was prepared [...] to go with intuition – [...] which] I think is quite exceptional. That’s the way I would like to run a gallery.” Trusttum was impressed by Brooke’s boldness and confidence in his work. His prioritized exhibition paid dividends – resulting in a sell-out-show.<sup>557</sup>

McAnergney described Brooke as a woman who “was nothing if not enthusiastic, vocal and prepared to push the boundaries”.<sup>558</sup> This is reiterated in an observation by Trusttum, who, when considering Brooke’s excited inclusion of him to the gallery’s programme, speculated that she “wasn’t going to let things stay the same”. He added: “if she hadn’t had died, [...] the gallery would have been known as a more boisterous gallery than it is”.<sup>559</sup> In hindsight, this recognition rings true, as, after Brooke passed away the Brooke Gifford Gallery did not

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<sup>550</sup> Eagle, Interview, 8 July 2013.

<sup>551</sup> McWhannell, Interview, 11 July 2013.

<sup>552</sup> Brooke approached Tina Hos for permission to show Trusttum by letter.

MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0198, Letter to Tina Hos from Brooke, 27 November 1975.

<sup>553</sup> Trusttum, Interview, 5 July 2013.

BGA, the Brooke Gifford Gallery’s Yearly Planners.

<sup>554</sup> As explained in chapter two of this thesis, Brooke had originally met Trusttum with her ex-husband.

Robin Woodward, *Philip Trusttum* (Auckland: The James Wallace Arts Trust, 2011) 57.

Trusttum, Interview, 5 July 2013.

<sup>555</sup> BGA, the Brooke Gifford Gallery’s Yearly Planners.

<sup>556</sup> Trusttum, Interview, 5 July 2013.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid.

<sup>558</sup> McAnergney, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>559</sup> Trusttum, Interview, 5 July 2013.

embrace post-modernism in the same way that the Jonathan Jensen Gallery did in the late 1980s.<sup>560</sup>

Through the Brooke Gifford Gallery, and as she did with Gallery 91, Brooke advanced professional careers with the sale of artwork to public institutions such as museums, art galleries and education providers. Within the first five years of its operation, the Brooke Gifford Gallery sold many works to public art galleries across New Zealand. These included: The Dowse Art Gallery,<sup>561</sup> the National Art Gallery,<sup>562</sup> The Sarjeant Gallery,<sup>563</sup> The Waikato Art Museum,<sup>564</sup> and of course, the RMAG – now the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu. During Brooke's directorship, the RMAG purchased the art of 27 different New Zealand artists. In fact, from the Brooke Gifford Gallery's inaugural exhibition, the RMAG purchased two of Tom Field's prints: *Chandos Let God Arise*, 1975, and *Metapehe No.3*, 1975.<sup>565</sup>

Other institutions that purchased artworks from the Brooke Gifford Gallery included: Auckland University Elam School of Fine Arts,<sup>566</sup> Christchurch Teachers College,<sup>567</sup> Nayland

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<sup>560</sup> This point is reiterated by the fact that, after Brooke's death, Morison was primarily represented by the Jonathan Jensen Gallery / Jonathan Smart Gallery, once it opened in 1988.

Vicki Piper, Jonathan Smart Gallery, Conversation, 17 December 2014.

<sup>561</sup> For example, artwork by Murray Hedwig and Toss Wollaston was purchased in 1976 and 1978. MB198, BBP, box 9, ref. no. 0178; box 9, ref. no. 0180, Brooke Gifford Gallery Exhibition Catalogues and Sales Books.

<sup>562</sup> For example, the work of Barry Cleavin, Bill Culbert, Neil Dawson, Rudolf Gopas, Quentin Macfarlane, Michael Reed, and Carl Sydow, were purchased by the National Art Gallery between 1976 and 1979. MB198, BBP, box 9, ref. no. 0178; ref. no. 0180; ref. no. 0181, Brooke Gifford Exhibition Catalogues Sales Book.

<sup>563</sup> MB198, BBP, box 13, ref. no. 0218, Folder of correspondence with the Sarjeant Gallery.

<sup>564</sup> For example, artwork by Olivia Spencer Bower, Quentin Macfarlane, Richard McWhannell, Alan Pearson, and Michael Reed was purchased during 1976 and 1977.

MB198, BBP, box 9, ref. no. 0178, Brooke Gifford Gallery Exhibition Catalogues and Sales Book.

<sup>565</sup> According to the records of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu, purchases by the RMDAG before 1980 included artwork produced by: Ted Bracey, Tom Field, Tony Fomison, Murray Grimsdale, Patrick Hanly, Ian Hutson, Simon McIntyre, Alan Pearson, Michael Reed, Michael Smither, Olivia Spencer Bower, Terry Stringer, Llewelyn Summers, Carl Sydow, Rob Taylor, Greer Twiss, and Pamela Wolfe. In addition, according to the Brooke Gifford gallery's records, the RMDAG also purchased works by these artists during Brooke's time: Nigel Brown, Rosemary Campbell, Bill Culbert, Gennie de Lange, Rosemary Johnston, Joanna Paul, Rob Taylor, Philip Trusttum, David Turner, and Richard McWhannell.

Peter Vangioni, Christchurch art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu Records, Correspondence, 31 May 2013.

MB198, BBP, box 12, ref. no. 0201, Letter to Brooke from the RMDAG, 1 March 1979; box 12, ref. no. 0201, hand written record of works purchased by the RMDAG, 1976 and 1978; box 12, ref. no. 0199, Exhibition catalogue, Tom Field.

<sup>566</sup> For example, purchasing an artwork by Murray Grimsdale in 1977.

MB198, BBP, box 9, ref. no. 0178, Brooke Gifford Gallery Exhibition Catalogues and Sales Book.

<sup>567</sup> MB198, BBP, box 11, ref. no. 0192, Brooke Gifford Gallery Receipt Book; box 9, ref. no. 0178; box 9, ref. no. 0180, Brooke Gifford Gallery Exhibition Catalogues and Sales Books.



College in Nelson,<sup>568</sup> the Canterbury Public Library,<sup>569</sup> the Hocken Library at the University of Otago,<sup>570</sup> the University of Canterbury,<sup>571</sup> and the University of Canterbury Staff Club.<sup>572</sup> The extensive list of artists' work purchased by these institutions reveals that Brooke and the Brooke Gifford Gallery were responsible for accelerating the professional careers of many New Zealand artists. Trusttun rightly acclaimed, "Barbara touched a lot of lives."<sup>573</sup>

### Barbara Brooke's Last Days

Brooke passed away suddenly from throat cancer in 1980 soon after returning from a holiday though Europe in August 1979 (See Fig.18.).<sup>574</sup> Many of her contemporaries explain the shock it was to discover that she was, in fact, chronically ill.<sup>575</sup> Brooke was permitted to be at home after her diagnosis, and Joanna Braithwaite and Kristin Leek helped Gifford in the gallery in Brooke's absence.<sup>576</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane, Rendall and Leek give accounts of caring for Brooke in her final weeks, with the support of Peter Brooke.<sup>577</sup> Boarding with Brooke at

<sup>568</sup> MB198, BBP, box 4, ref. no. 0034, Letter to the Brooke Gifford from Nayland College, 13 March 1979.

<sup>569</sup> For example, a painting by Leo Bensemann was purchased in 1979.

MB198, BBP, box 9, ref. no. 0181, Brooke Gifford Gallery Exhibition Catalogues and Sales Book.

<sup>570</sup> For example, artwork by Gretchen Albrecht, Murray Grimsdale and Rob Taylor was purchased in 1976 and 1977 by the Hocken Library at the University of Otago.

MB198, BBP, box 9, ref. no. 0178, Brooke Gifford Gallery Exhibition Catalogues and Sales Book; box 4, ref. no. 0034, Letter to the Brooke Gifford from the University of Otago, 29 January 1979.

<sup>571</sup> During Brooke's directorship, the University of Canterbury purchased *Red Sea*, 1975, by Michael Reed. Jamie Hanton, University of Canterbury Art Collection Curator, List of Acquisitions from the Brooke Gifford Gallery, Email correspondence, 20 March 2014.

<sup>572</sup> MB198, BBP, box 9, ref. no. 0178, Brooke Gifford Gallery Exhibition Catalogues and Sales Book.

<sup>573</sup> See the previous footnotes for the artists whose work was purchased.

Trusttun, Interview, 5 July 2013.

<sup>574</sup> Brooke and Gifford decided that they would each take a trip overseas. Rendall remembered that her aunt returned to Christchurch in September or October 1979. However, Brooke appeared to have returned to the gallery in August 1979 – shown by her signature in a receipt book.

MB198, BBP, box 11, ref. no. 0190, Brooke Gifford Gallery Receipt Book.

Lyndsay Rendall, Conversation, 28 February 2014.

<sup>575</sup> While Cruickshank remembered that Brooke looked well when she was diagnosed with cancer, Macfarlane recalled that when she had returned from holiday, she had begun to complain about unusual back pain and tiredness as she worked in the gallery.

Cruickshank, Interview, 5 July 2013.

Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>576</sup> At the time, Joanna Braithwaite, had recently started to study Fine Arts at UCSFA.

Cruickshank, Conversation, 7 May 2013.

Leek, Interview, 17 April 2013.

Joanna Braithwaite, Interview, 26 January 2012.

<sup>577</sup> Leek recounted that it was while Gifford was on her trip overseas that Brooke fell ill: "Judith came back and Barbara was at home and people took it in turns to be with her and I was one of those people."

Leek, Interview, 17 April 2013.

the time, Kirsten Macfarlane explained: “[s]he was told she had six weeks to live [...]. She went on a special diet that I had to administer to her [...]. She was trying to cure herself”.<sup>578</sup>

Brooke’s last public appearance at the gallery was for an exhibition opening days before her death. “Work for A New Decade: Six Painters” opened on 10 March 1980, and included the artwork of Don Peebles, Patrick Hanly, Milan Mrkusich, Ralph Hotere, Richard Killeen and Gordon Walters – some of the leading names in New Zealand art that Brooke had long been associated with.<sup>579</sup> Leek remembered: “some man who had befriended her and was kind, [...he] brought her in a wheel chair up to the gallery to see this show [... She wanted] to be part of this exhibition [...]. She was smiling and happy and a part of it all, even though she was suffering.”<sup>580</sup> Brooke’s health declined quickly and she died in hospital two days before her 55<sup>th</sup> birthday on 21 March 1980.<sup>581</sup>

Brooke invested all that she had learnt – in her accumulated experience and her connections as an arts professional – in the Brooke Gifford Gallery; she brought 16 years of knowledge into the partnership with Gifford and fulfilled the role of a serious dealer gallery Director in Christchurch. In this venture Brooke utilized her pragmatic business sensibility, her empathy and insight into the needs of artists, her organisation skills, and her shrewd and creative sales abilities. Committed and passionate, Brooke was responsible for establishing a business which allowed local and national contemporary artists to receive instruction, encouragement, exposure, and a reputation to ensure further sales – even internationally; ultimately, Brooke provided an opportunity for contemporary artists to live from their work as professionals. Additionally, Christchurch’s attitudes to contemporary art shifted with Brooke’s ambitious and determined development of the local art market. Brooke established a professional dealer gallery that would serve contemporary artists and the Christchurch public for total of 36 years.<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>579</sup> MB198, BBP, box 9, ref. no. 0182, Brooke Gifford Exhibition Catalogues Sales Book.

<sup>580</sup> Leek, Interview, 17 April 2013.

<sup>581</sup> Leek explained that while Brooke was in hospital she was visited by the Vicar Robert Low of Saint Barnabas Church in Fendalton, and from their discussions, Brooke decided to become a Christian.

Leek, Interview, 17 April 2013.

Rendall, Email Correspondence, 2 July 2013.

<sup>582</sup> See footnote 5 of this thesis for further explanation; the gallery’s lengthy time of operation recorded here does not include its continuation on-line.

Gifford, Email correspondence, 23 July 2013.

# Conclusion

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Barbara Brooke spent her life forging a support structure for contemporary artists; she anticipated and led an arts professionalism in Canterbury. However, her story also represents a missing narrative in New Zealand's art history. Barbara Brooke has been a neglected figure. This is a dilemma determined by prejudice, as many comments by her contemporaries can only be described as carrying patronising undertones. For example, Macfarlane undermined her calculated efforts to support craftspeople and her business innovation when he explained, that with the Mollett Street Market, she "unwittingly got together a whole lot of artists [who were...] waiting in the wings".<sup>583</sup> When, in fact, Brooke's career announced her to be an individual with a business and political acumen that was unmatched by the majority of people working professionally in the arts in New Zealand during this period.

Additionally, Coley undervalues the seriousness of Brooke's accomplishments with his statement: "I can't remember much of Barbara being anything other than a very important friend of the visual arts".<sup>584</sup> This comment was meant as a compliment, but it unearths an attitude normalised by our culture: an underlying doubt in the seriousness of a women's professionalism. Though the words "very important friend" denote a perception of Brooke's essential relational approach, this comment still underestimates her work as 'not-quite-professional'. Brooke was more than a friend to contemporary New Zealand artists – she was a serious advocate and an art professional.

Furthermore, when Brooke is contextualised against men of her time – such as her ex-husband, Andre Brooke, or dealer gallery Director, Peter McLeavey – she is distinguished by her longstanding devotion to, and comprehensive support of, the New Zealand contemporary artist. While Andre is remembered as the man who atypically took Canterbury artists seriously in the 1950s and early 1960s, his professional services to the Christchurch art community took place over three years – from 1959 to 1963 – then he returned to Europe. It

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<sup>583</sup> Macfarlane, Interview, 11 June 2013.

<sup>584</sup> Coley, Interview, 11 June 2013.

was Barbara who worked as an art professional in Canterbury for over 20 years; that said, she can no longer be classified as “simply the wife of Andre”.<sup>585</sup>

Additionally, while McLeavey has been defined as the model New Zealand dealer of the 1960s and 1970s, Barbara Brooke thought in broader terms. She not only founded the Brooke Gifford Gallery, but, published a critical arts magazine, established a contemporary craft market, and placed herself at the forefront of the wider developments of professionalism throughout the country with her involvement in selected art committees and the first national arts conference. In short, McLeavey established a dealer gallery in Wellington, while Brooke generously pioneered arts professionalism at a more national level – she forged an infrastructure to support contemporary artists which continues to benefit those involved today.

Brooke’s kindness and sense of empathy allowed her to build many long-lasting friendships – so much so that she has been described as a “celebrity”;<sup>586</sup> Brooke utilized her relational approach in her ventures, and today, a legacy remains because of her alliance with others. Brooke chose solidarity over individualism. In her established place of rapport within the art and professional networks of New Zealand, she was aware of the capacity of collaboration. Brooke never worked alone: she managed beside her ex-husband in Gallery 91 and the CSA, she co-edited with Bensemman, she founded the MSM with three female companions, she was involved in numerous councils and committees, and then she co-directed a contemporary dealer gallery with Gifford.

Brooke’s preference for collaboration illustrated her acumen of the wider support network for the success of the artist. This is demonstrated in her devoted involvement with arts committees and councils, and also, in her ability to call favours and capitalize on her connections. For example, Brooke was able to refurbish a dealer gallery on a tight budget, recruit artists to represent from across the country, and draw a buying clientele. Brooke was ‘the right’ person of influence in New Zealand to establish a successful and long standing contemporary dealer gallery.

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<sup>585</sup> John Simpson, Interview, 27 March and 11 April 2013.

<sup>586</sup> Cleavin and Copland, Interview, 30 January 2012.

In her foresight, Brooke understood that her goals could not be achieved alone: she accepted her own limitations and knew that working with others utilized individual strengths, produced an effective team, and provided an opportunity to influence. For example, Brooke selected Gifford as her partner for the Brooke Gifford Gallery because of their effective working relationship, which she had experienced during the Mollett Street Market. Brooke knew Gifford's reliability complimented her drive and charisma.<sup>587</sup> Furthermore, Brooke's objective to establish the contemporary artist was a legacy left to Gifford with the Brooke Gifford Gallery. In many ways, Gifford continued to serve contemporary artists and the Christchurch public through the gallery's staggering 36 years of operation –<sup>588</sup> a phenomenon made possible by Gifford's loyalty to Brooke's bequeathed professionalism.

Brooke was a successful arts professional, a bureaucrat, and an entrepreneur. Her significance in the New Zealand art scene was recognised by her colleague from The Caxton Press, Bensemann. He wrote to Mary Anne Brown (Brooke's mother) immediately after Brooke's death: "I only hope that the respect and high regard in which she was held by the art community throughout New Zealand may be of some comfort to you. [...] People of her ability and brilliant personality are rare indeed."<sup>589</sup> The truth be told, Barbara Brooke was a significant benefactress to contemporary New Zealand art; a visionary and a trend-setter, she nurtured professionalism in the arts as a highly influential New Zealand woman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>587</sup> Ibid

Kirsten Macfarlane, Interview, 14 June 2013.

<sup>588</sup> For further explanation on the Brooke Gifford Gallery's longevity, see footnote 5 of this thesis.

<sup>589</sup> Correspondence by Bensemann, Mount Eden, Auckland, Letter to Mary Anne Brown from Leo Bensemann, 24 March 1980 (reproduced with the kind permission of Cathy Harrington for the Bensemann Estate).

# Appendix 1:

## Gallery 91

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### Working Members

A document from the gallery's archives officially lists the following artists as "Working Artist Members":

Leo Bensemann, Ted Bracey, Peter Bromhead, Helen Brown, Andre Bruck, Russell Clark, John Coley, Roy Cowan, Austen Deans, J. Doudney, Rona Fleming, Ivy Fyfe, Rudolf Gopas, Frank Gross, V.O. Heinz, Louise Henderson, A. James, C.D. Jansen, Olive Jones, William Jones, Hamish Keith, David Kennedy, Janet Kenny, Lincoln Lee, W.S. Leslie, I.M. Lough, Doris Lusk, Colin McCahon, Quentin Macfarlane, William Main, Dorothy Manning, Charles Milne, Milan Mrkusich, P. Mulcahy, James Nelson, John Oakley, Paul Olds, Juliet Peter, John Pine Snadden, W.J. Reed, Elsa Richards, Julian Royds, Freda Simmonds, Joan Spiers, Olivia Spencer Bower, O.C. Stephens, William Sutton, P. Tallent, E. Mervyn Taylor, D. B. Wilkie, and Toss Woollaston.<sup>590</sup>

### The "Open Exhibition"

Possibly taking place within the first few months of Gallery 91's operation,<sup>591</sup> there was a large public exhibition with 172 different works from over 80 artists – all for sale. Listed in the exhibition catalogue are the following names:<sup>592</sup>

Dr D. Anderson, S.J. Askew, Dorothy Barnett, Valerie Barry, Ngaire Bennet, Claire Boocock, B. J. Briant, S.M. Brockett, N.E. Burrows, E. Chapman, Anne Chapman-Cohen, Ann Charman, E.J. Carnaby, P.S. Carson, G.H. Cousins, V. Denniston, F.M. de Roo, M. Ensor, Phyllis Fairweather, Nora Finn, S.I. Fitch, Barbara Fowler, Murray Fowler, Edith Gardner, Nora Gardner, C. Gray, Murray Grimsdale, Isabell Hall, Thelma Hall, Alwyn Harbott, Patricia Hodgkiss, Beverley Hubble, Isabell Hudson, V.A. Humm, D. Hunt, Elsa Hunter, Francis Irvine-Morris, G.F. Jenkins, Ernest Kalnins, Leila Kelly, Peter Klokker, Pauline Knights, J. J. Laidlaw, R.R. Laidlaw, L. Lewis, E. Mavis McEvedy, L.F. McFarlane,

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<sup>590</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0017, "Working Artist Members."

<sup>591</sup> This exhibition took place before June 1959, as it does not feature in the gallery's documented programme. MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0018, "Membership Programme June to January."

<sup>592</sup> MB198, BBP, box 2, ref. no. 0016, Exhibition catalogue, "Open Exhibition."

Tiria McIntosh, Dallas McKenzie, Rex Marple, Mary Marshall, E.N. Meares, Owen Merton, Bertha Miles, Ruth Millar, Jane Murray, K.M. Papprell, E.R. Parkes, Dorothy Patterson, Rubi Peryman, Alice Porter, Gypsy Poulston, Dr Walter Ramsay, Sally Richards, Anne Robson, Marion Rolleston, Bruce Ross, Beryl Sloss, Nora Smythe, Jennifer Stacey, Robin Stevens, P. M. Thomas, Ethel Thomson, Barbara Tidswell, Veronica Tweedie, P.R. Vincent, Reverend F.H. Waldron, Leslie White, Velma White, Noni Willett, W.S. Willett, D. Williams, Lynette Wills, Diana Wilson, and Berti Wohler.

# Gallery 91's Programme

This document is located in MB198, Barbara Brooke Papers, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, box 2, ref. no. 0018, and is reproduced with permission.

GALLERY 91

91a Cashel Street,  
Tisdall's Building  
CHRISTCHURCH.

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMME - JUNE TO JANUARY.

29th <u>JUNE</u>	Monday 8 p.m.	Lecture on Sculpture with slides by <u>Mr. E. J. DOUDNEY</u>	
30th <u>JUNE</u>	Tuesday 8 p.m.	Private view of One-Man Show of New Zealand Painter living in Paris <u>DOUGLAS MacDIARMID.</u> To be opened by Miss Ngaio Marsh. Exhibition open from 1st July to 11th July 1959.	Sherry
7th <u>JULY</u>	Tuesday 8 p.m.	Light Orchestral Concert to be given in the Gallery by the Christchurch Orchestral Society.	
13th <u>JULY</u>	Monday 8 p.m.	Private View of <u>Contemporary New Zealand Drawings.</u> Exhibition arranged by the Auckland Art Gallery. Open from 13th July to 21st July 1959.	Sherry
24th <u>JULY</u>	Friday 8 p.m.	Private View of Combined Exhibition Wellington Painters. <u>Brian Carmody</u> <u>Melvin Day</u> <u>Don Peebles</u> <u>John Pine Snadden</u> <u>Pat Williams</u> Exhibition open from 24th July to 7th August.	Sherry
21st <u>JULY</u>	Tuesday 8 p.m.	Lecture on Pottery with slides. <u>Mr. John Wood.</u>	
11th <u>AUGUST</u>	Tuesday 8 p.m.	Private View of One-Man Show <u>JOHN COLEY</u> of Christchurch. Exhibition open from 11th August to 22nd August.	Sherry
18th <u>AUGUST</u>	Tuesday 8 p.m.	Private View of Three-man Show Auckland Painters. <u>Robert Ellis</u> <u>Ron Stenberg</u> <u>William Jones</u> Exhibition open from 18th August to 28th August.	Sherry
25th <u>AUGUST</u>	Tuesday 8 p.m.	<u>Panel Discussion</u> "Looking at Pictures"	
31st <u>AUGUST</u> to 13th <u>SEPTEMBER</u> New Zealand Photographic Society's Exhibition.			
14th <u>SEPTEMBER</u>	Monday 8 p.m.	Private View of Exhibition arranged by the Auckland Art Gallery. <u>NEW ZEALAND PRINTS.</u> Exhibition open from 14th September to 23rd September.	
25th <u>SEPTEMBER</u> to 2nd <u>OCTOBER</u> <u>Christian Art Exhibition</u> arranged by the Catholic Adult Education Institute.			
6th <u>OCTOBER</u>	Tuesday 8 p.m.	Private View of One-man Show of <u>COLIN McCACON.</u> Including Panels of Northern Landscape. Exhibition open from 6th October, to 18th October.	Sherry
27th <u>OCTOBER</u>	Tuesday 8 p.m.	<u>Art in Photography</u> Lecture on amateur photography and colour slides.	
7th <u>NOVEMBER</u>	Saturday 8 p.m.	One-man Show <u>J. Y. BLACK</u> of Wellington Paintings, ceramics, jewellery. Private view for members. Exhibition open 7th November to 21st November.	Sherry
11th <u>DECEMBER</u>	Friday 8 p.m.	Christmas Party for members.	
23rd <u>JANUARY</u> 1959.	1st Anniversary of Gallery 91.		

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<u>ART TUITION CLASSES</u>	Children 8 to 14 years	Saturday mornings 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
	Adult Class	Saturday afternoons 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.
	Permanent working group of Painters Class arranged by the Adult Education Department Wednesday evenings 7.30 p.m.	

For further information please enquire at the Office, Gallery 91 or telephone 76 588.



GALLERY 91 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMME (Continued).

Monday, 25th May, 1959. 8 p.m.

Lecture on Painting by Mr. W. S. Sutton with demonstration.

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Saturday 13th June, 1959 - 27th June, 1959 - One Man Show

HELEN BROWN

of Auckland.

Members Private View . Saturday, 13th June, 1959 - 5.30 p.m. - 7 p.m. Sherry.

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Monday, 29th June, 1959.

Lecture on Sculpture with Slides by  
Mr. E. J. Doudney.

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PAINTING TUITION:

A painting class has been arranged for Saturday Afternoons  
in the Gallery 91 from 2.30p.m. to 5 p.m. Tutor Mr. R. Gopas.  
For further information please enquire at the office.

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In the near future an Art Class for children aged eight years and  
over, will be held on Saturday mornings in Gallery 91.  
For further information enquire at the office or telephone 76-588.

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GALLERY 91.  
Tiedall's Building,  
91A Cashel Street,  
CHRISTCHURCH.  
Telephone: 76588.

## Appendix 2:

### *Ascent*

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#### Colour Plates and Recorded Sponsorship

The reproduced colour images in *Ascent: A Journal of the Visual Arts in New Zealand* are as follows:<sup>593</sup>

No.1, p.17	Patrick Hanly, <i>New Order 29, Part 2, Pacific</i> , 1963. Plate sponsored by the Auckland City Art Gallery.
No.1, p.40	Milan Mrkusich, <i>Painting 61-24</i> , 1961. Plate sponsored by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council.
No.2, p.15	Toss Woollaston, <i>Upper Moutere</i> , 1946. Plate sponsored by the Auckland City Art Gallery.
No.3, p.46	Olivia Spenser Bower, <i>Spinning</i> , 1968.
No.3, p.57	Robert Ellis, <i>Motorways</i> , 1969.
No.3, p.58	Don Binney, <i>Pacific Frigate Bird</i> , 1969.
No.3, p.59	Gordon Walters, <i>Tawa</i> , 1968.
No.4, p.13	Gordon Walters, <i>Untitled</i> , 1969.
Final issue, <sup>594</sup> p.7	Frances Hodgkins, <i>Self Portrait: Still Life</i> , 1941. Plate sponsored by the Auckland City Art Gallery.
Final issue, p.33	Frances Hodgkins, <i>Summer</i> , 1912. Plate sponsored by the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.
Final issue, p.40	Frances Hodgkins, <i>Pleasure Garden</i> , 1933. Plate sponsored by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.
Final issue, p.48	Frances Hodgkins, <i>The Red Cockerel</i> , 1924. Plate sponsored by the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.
Final issue, p.64	Frances Hodgkins, <i>Katharine and Anthony West</i> , 1937. Plate sponsored by the National Art Gallery.

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<sup>593</sup> This information was compiled from the five issues of *Ascent: A Journal of the Arts in New Zealand*, and at times the sponsor of the colour plate was not located.

<sup>594</sup> *Ascent: A Journal of the Arts in New Zealand* Frances Hodgkins Commemorative Issue.

## Appendix 3:

# The Brooke Gifford Gallery

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### Exhibitions during Brooke's Directorship: May 1975 to March 1980

The following is a list of exhibitions composed from the gallery's archives, and ephemera held at Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury. While some exhibition titles were specific, Brooke and Gifford mostly used generic titles such as, "Recent Paintings", or simply the artist's name; the following information is to the extent of these compiled sources.<sup>595</sup> Additionally, when two artists are listed, one would have exhibited in the main gallery and the other in the print gallery.

#### 1975

26 May – 6 June	Tom Field.
9 June – 5 July	Stock Exhibition.
21 July – 1 August	Alan Pearson.
4 – 15 August	Ted Bracey, Ralph Hotere, Quentin Macfarlane, Julia Morison, "Drawings and Small Works."
18 – 30 August	Stephen Clark.
5 – 19 September	Barry Cleavin and Trevor Moffitt.
22 September – 3 October	Bing Dawe, "Sculpture," and Tim Garrity, "20 Paintings."
13 October	Carl Sydow.
28 October – 7 November	Susan Chaytor, "Recent Paintings", and Michael Reed, "Prints and Drawings."
10 November – 21 November	Greer Twiss.

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<sup>595</sup> MB198, BBP, box 12, Folders of correspondence of the Brooke Gifford Gallery; box 3; box 9, ref. no. 0179; box 9, ref. no. 0180; box 9, ref. no. 0181; box 9, ref. no. 0182, the Brooke Gifford Exhibition Catalogues Sales Books.

BGA, the Brooke Gifford Gallery's Yearly Planners.

"Brooke Gifford Gallery," Artist's File, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

24 November – 5 December	Wilhelmus Ruifrok, “Paintings and Drawings.”
8 December – 19 December	Rosemary Campbell and Ralph Hotere.
<b>1976</b>	
23 February – 5 March	Stephanie Sheehan, William Collison, Joanna Hardy, “Three Standard Deviations.”
8 – 19 March	Olivia Spencer Bower, “Watercolours: Beside the River 1936 – 1976,” and Gretchen Albrecht, “Felt Banners.”
5 – 23 April	Marilynn Webb, “Engravings and Drawings.”
17 – 28 May	Tom Field, “Paintings.”
31 May – 11 June	Mike and Peter Worrall, “Optimism.”
14 – 25 June	Marte Szirmay, “Sculpture.”
27 June – 9 July	Alan Pearson, “Portraits and Poetry.”
12 – 23 July	John Papas.
26 July – 6 August	Leonard Lambert, “Ways of the Foolish Wise.”
9 – 20 August	Quentin Macfarlane.
25 August – 3 September	Gavin Chilcott and Tony Lane, “Paintings and Drawings.”
8 – 17 September	Petrus van der Velden, “Paintings and Drawings.”
20 September – 1 October	Elizabeth Buchanan, Errol Shaw, Pauline Trengrove, Jacqueline Dunlop, “New Work: Graduates of University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts.”
4 – 15 October	Toss Woollaston, “Oils, Watercolours and Drawings.”
18 – 29 October	Julia Morison.
15 – 27 November	Trevor Moffitt, “Paintings,” and Michael Smither, “Oil Sketches.”
29 November to 10 December	Gennie de Lange, “Ceramic Paintings.”
13 – 23 December	Bill Hammond, “Drawings in Wood,” and David Turner, “Ceramics.”
<b>1977</b>	
7 – 25 March	Rob Taylor, “Paintings and Drawings.”
28 March – 7 April	Stock Exhibition.
13 – 29 April	Leo Bensemann, Rosemary Campbell, Barry Cleavin,

	Tom Field, Ralph Hotere, Louise Lewis, Quentin Macfarlane, Trevor Moffitt, Joanna Paul, Don Peebles, Michael Reed, Olivia Spenser Bower, Michael Thomas, Gordon Walter, "Artists from the South."
3 – 27 May	Don Binney, Jacqueline Fahey, Glenda Randerson, Peter Siddell, "Four Realist Painters from the North."
30 May – 10 June	Jane Evans, "Recent Paintings."
13 – 24 June	Murray Grimsdale, "Paintings and Drawings."
27 June – 8 July	Richard McWhannell, "Recent Paintings."
11 – 22 July	Pamela Wolfe, "Recent Paintings," and Rosemary Johnson, "Sculpture."
25 July – 5 August	Rosemary Campbell, "Recent Paintings."
8 – 26 August	Patrick Hanly, "Pure Painting."
12 – 23 September	Graham Barton, "Paintings and Drawings."
27 September – 7 October	Tom Field, "Recent Paintings."
10 – 14 October	Stock Exhibition.
17 – 28 October	Tony Fomison and Michael Reed, and Llewelyn Summers, "Recent Sculpture."
1 – 11 November	Helen Bennett and Simon McIntyre.
14 – 25 November	Grahame Sydney, "Etchings 1975 – 1977," and John Weeks.
5 – 21 December	Geoff Park, "11 Etchings," and Olivia Spencer Bower, "A Selection of Water Colours."

## 1978

30 January – 10 February	Jacqueline Dunlop and Errol Shaw.
13 February – 3 March	Malcolm Benham, "Kite Series Paintings."
6 – 17 March	Ted Bracey, John Cousins, Quentin Macfarlane.
1 – 12 May	Paul Johns.
15 – 26 May	Joanna Paul, "Drawings," and Terry Stringer, "Recent Bronze Sculpture and Drawings."
30 May – 9 June	Philip Truettum, "Recent Paintings and Early Work – Australia 1967."
12 – 23 June	Robert McLeod, Rob Taylor, Malcolm Benham, "Three

	Wellington Painters.”
26 June – 7 July	Nigel Brown, “Van Gogh Paintings and Related Works.”
10 – 21 July	Pauline Trengrove, “Land Series.”
24 July – 4 August	Bill Culbert.
7 – 18 August	Michael Thomas, “Colour Interaction Paintings.”
21 August – 1 September	Neil Grant.
4 – 15 September	Tom Field, “New Paintings.”
2 – 13 October	Tony Geddes, “Recent Paintings,” and Jeffery Harris, “Drawings and Etchings.”
16 – 28 October	John Coley, “Boxes or Hard Times Art,” and Alan Pearson, “Paintings 1976 – 1977.”
30 October – 10 November	Gennie de Lange, “Ceramic Paintings,” and Murray Hedwig, “Images.”
13 – 24 November	Neil Dawson, “House Alterations: Small Sculptures,” and Trevor Moffitt, “Rakaia Landscapes and Figure Painting 1978.”
27 November – 8 December	Bing Dawe and Clive Humphreys.

## **1979**

5 – 23 March	Ted Bracey, Elizabeth Buchanan, Michael Ebel, Tom Field, Tony Geddes, Ralph Hotere, Quentin Macfarlane, Trevor Moffitt, Don Peebles, Michael Reed, Michael Thomas, Pauline Trengrove, Philip Trusttun, Gordon Walters, “New Work from the South.”
7 – 18 May	Patricia France, and Julia Morison, “Contrastare Series.”
21 May – 1 June	Rodney Fumpston, and John Parker, “Ceramics.”
5 – 15 June	Leo Bensemann.
18 – 29 June	Malcolm Benham, “Recent Work.”
2 – 13 July	Nigel Brown, “Recent Paintings.”
16 – 22 July	Max Gimblett, “Recent Work from New York.”
30 July – 10 August	Rob Taylor and Robert McLeod.
12 – 24 August	Dorothy Buchanan, “Music,” and Rosemary Campbell,

	“Paintings.”
27 August – 7 September	John Hurrell, “Ten Paintings,” and Eion Stevens, “Seven Paintings.”
10 – 21 September	Philip Trusttum, “Recent Work.”
24 September – 5 October	Alan Pearson, and Elizabeth Buchanan.
8 – 19 October	Michael Ebel, “Recent Work,” and Tony Geddes, “Recent Work”.
23 October – 2 November	Grant Banbury, “Window Paintings.”
5 – 16 November	Bryan James.
19 – 30 November	Stanley Palmer, “Bamboo Engravings,” and Michael Thomas.
26 November – 7 December	Billy Apple, “The Given is an Art-Political Statement.” <sup>596</sup>
10 – 20 December	Malcolm Benham, Sally Burton, Philip Clairmont, Jacqueline Dunlop, Bill Hammond, Paul Johns, Quentin Macfarlane, Stanley Palmer, Terry Stringer, Llewelyn Summers, Rosemary Sydow, Gary Tricker, David Turner, Gordon Walters, Marilyn Webb, Pamela Wolfe, “Christmas Exhibition of Small Works.”
10 – 20 December	John Hurrell and Paul Jones (curated by Billy Apple).
<b>1980</b>	
26 February – 7 March	Jacqueline Dunlop.
10 – 28 March	Patrick Hanly, Richard Killeen, Milan Mrkusich, Don Peebles, Gordon Walters, “Work for a New Decade – Six Painters.”

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<sup>596</sup> Apple’s invite lists the dates of his exhibition as 1 – 19 November 1979, but this does not concur with Brooke and Gifford’s diary entries or the dates documented in *Art New Zealand*.  
“Brooke Gifford Gallery,” Artist’s File, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.  
MB198, BBP, box 10, ref. no. 0183, Diary 1979, Entries on the 21, 23 and 26 November 1979.  
Curnow, “Billy Apple,” 29.



**Figure 2.**  
Photograph of Elsie Barbara Brooke, c.1944.  
*Courtesy of Lyndsay Rendall.*





**Figure 3.**  
Andre Brooke, *Untitled*, (of Elsie) c.1946. (Oil on board).  
*Courtesy of Lyndsay Rendall.*



**Figure 4.**  
Photographs of Barbara and Andre Brooke on their wedding day, 1945.  
*Courtesy of Lyndsay Rendall.*



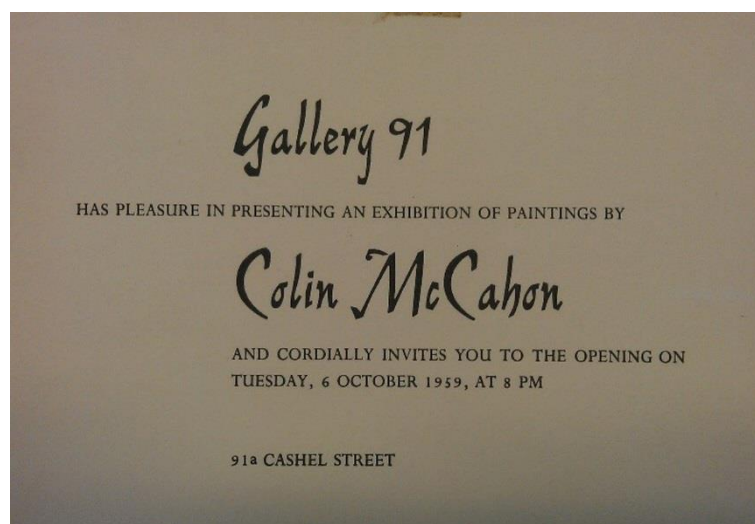
**Figure 5.**

Photograph of Barbara's Mother (Mary-Anne Brown), Barbara, Baby Peter and Andre Brooke, c.1954.

*Courtesy of Lyndsay Rendall.*



**Figure 6.**  
 Andre Brooke, *Untitled*, c.1957. (Oil on board).  
*Courtesy of the University of Canterbury Art Collection.*



**Figure 7.**  
 Colin McCahon, Exhibition Invitation, Gallery 91, 1959.  
*Courtesy of the University of Canterbury Archive Collection.*



**Figure 8.**

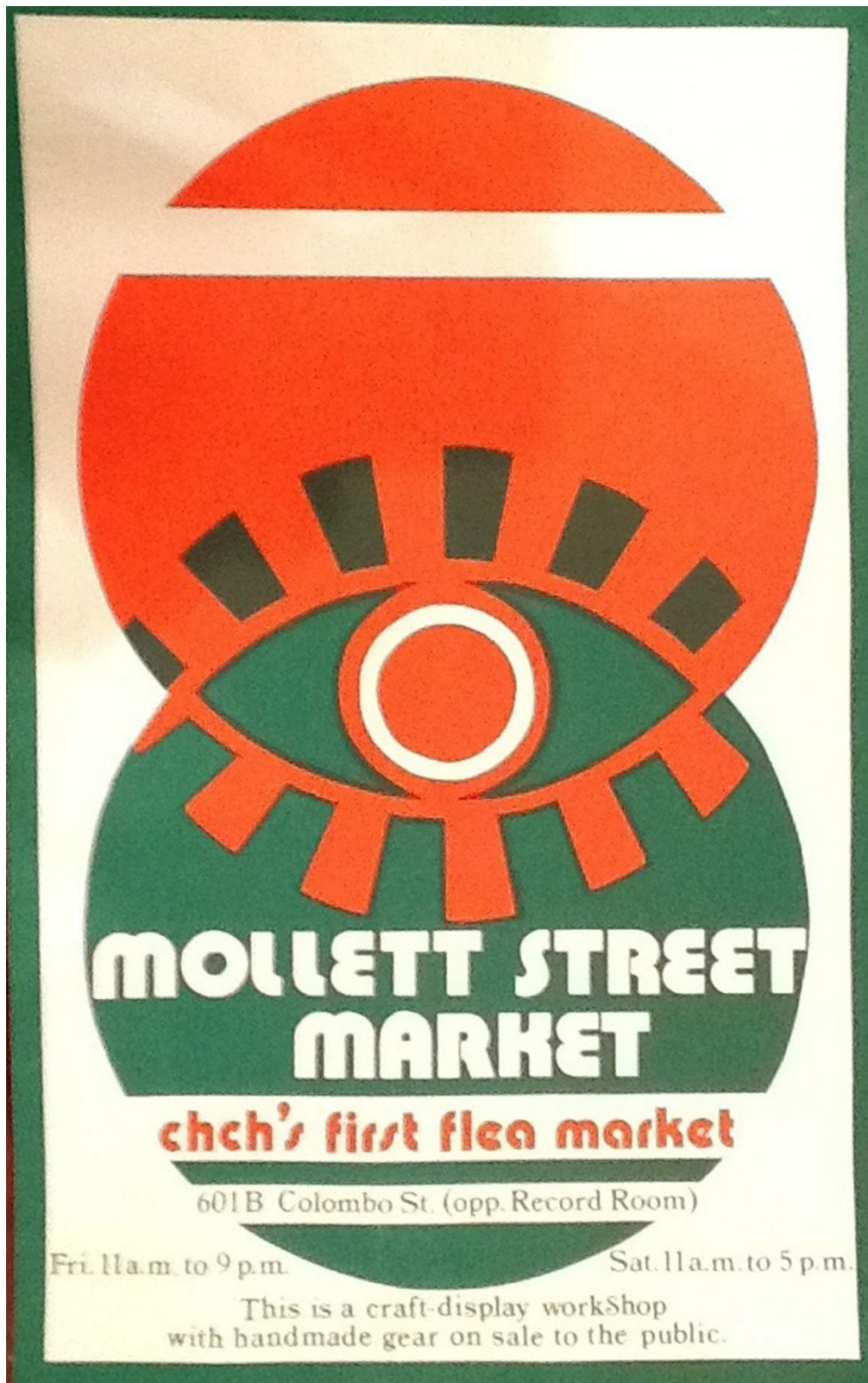
Dame Ngaio Marsh, Opening the inaugural private viewing, Gallery 91, 1959.  
*Courtesy of the University of Canterbury Archive Collection.*



**Figure 9.**

Gallery 91, 1959.  
*Courtesy of Home and Building, 1959.*





**Figure 10.**  
The Mollett Street Market Flier, c.1972.  
*Courtesy of Lavinia Cruickshank.*



**Figure 11.**

Photograph of one of Bill Hammond's wooden toys,  
Crafted for the Mollett Street Market, (Object) c.1972.  
*Courtesy of Lavinia Cruickshank.*



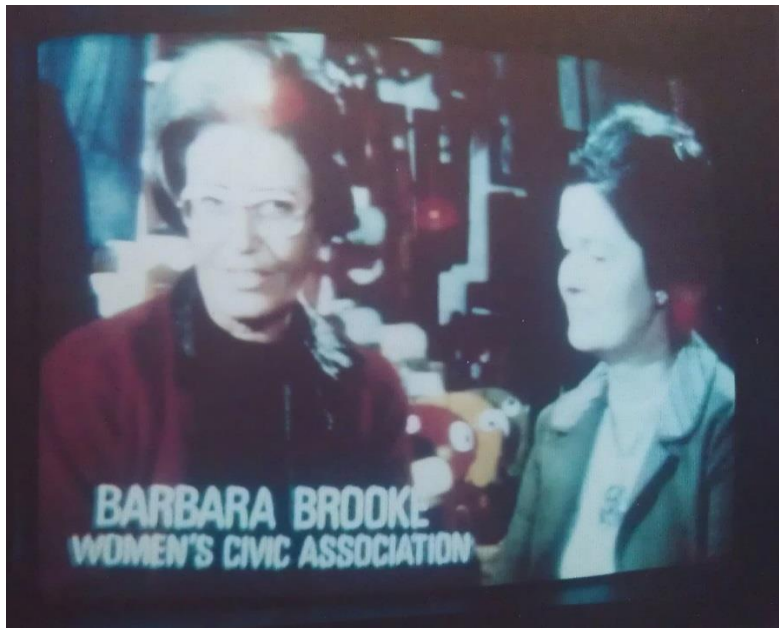
**Figure 12.**

Photograph of a clothing stall at the Mollett Street Market, c.1973.  
*Courtesy of Lavinia Cruickshank.*



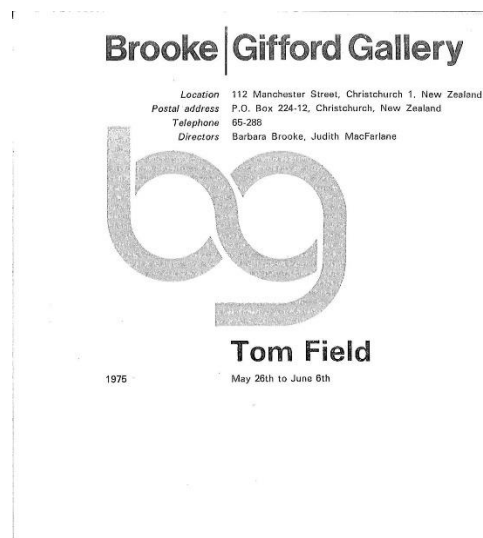


**Figure 13.**  
Photograph of Barbara Brooke and Yvonne Rust, c.1967.  
Bill Sutton's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party.  
*Courtesy of John Coley.*



**Figure 14.**

Photograph of Barbra Brooke's interview on Chanel Two of the NZBC, 1974.  
*Courtesy of Lyndsay Rendall.*



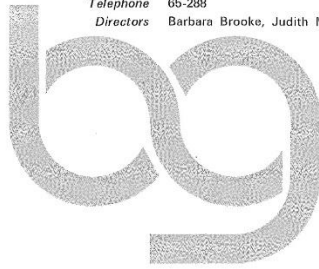
**Figure 15.**

Tom Field, Exhibition Catalogue, the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 1975.  
*Courtesy of the University of Canterbury Archive Collection.*



# Brooke | Gifford Gallery

**Location** 112 Manchester Street, Christchurch 1, New Zealand  
**Postal address** P.O. Box 224-12, Christchurch, New Zealand  
**Telephone** 65-288  
**Directors** Barbara Brooke, Judith MacFarlane

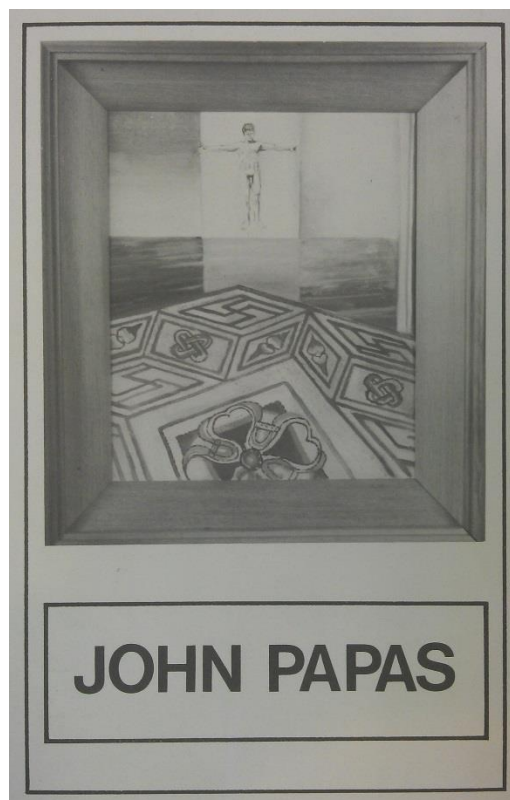


**Ted Bracey**  
**Ralph Hotere**  
**Quentin MacFarlane**  
**Julia Morison**

1975

August 4th to August 15th

**Figure 16.**  
“Drawings and Small Works,” Exhibition Catalogue, the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 1975.  
*Courtesy of the University of Canterbury Archive Collection.*



**Figure 17.**  
John Papa, Exhibition Catalogue, the Brooke Gifford Gallery, 1976.  
*Courtesy of the University of Canterbury Archive Collection.*



**Figure 18.**  
Photograph of Barbara Brooke in Venice, 1979.  
*Courtesy of Lyndsay Rendall.*

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